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THE FAMILY OF TALBOT,  
LORDS TALBOT AND EARLS OF SHREWSBURY  
IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

by  
A. J. POLLARD

A dissertation for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy submitted to the University of  
Bristol in September 1968

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## SYNOPSIS

This is a study of the expansion, retention and exercise of the territorial, political and military power of the premier earldom of England in the most crucial century of its history. The history of the Earls of Shrewsbury has been approached in four parts, the first two covering the genealogical and political history of the family, the second exploring aspects of the material bases of its power.

The study begins with a survey of the position of Ankaret, Lady Talbot, widow of the fourth Lord, over the turn of the century and the baptism of her elder sons in war in Wales. It carries through the history of her family until the succession of her second son, John, to the combined inheritances of Talbot, Le Strange and Furnival in 1422. The second chapter traces the fortune of this inheritance under John, concentrating particularly on the two great disputes, one with Lord Berkeley over the possession of the barony of Berkeley, and the other with his own heir over the partition of the inheritance, in which he involved his family. The third chapter considers the fortunes of the second and third Earls in the Wars of the Roses. It is argued in this that John, second Earl of Shrewsbury is to be numbered among the moderate Lancastrians in the years 1453-60 and that Edward IV, with eventual success, took advantage of long minorities during his reign to reconcile the Talbots to his régime.



The second part is devoted to the career of the principal founder of the family fortunes, John, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury. In one chapter the intervention of him and his brother Richard, Archbishop of Dublin, in the affairs of Ireland is described and in a second his long war career in France, which ended after thirty-three years on the field of Castillon, is traced and the legend that grew up around his name is assessed.

The third and fourth parts look beyond the surface of genealogical and political history to examine the foundations of the family's power and influence in its estates and affinity in the time of the first Earl. One chapter considers the composition of the first Earl's following and the influence maintained through it, particularly in Shropshire, in spite of his continued absence abroad. A second examines the composition of his retinues of war in Normandy and reveals that there were only very loose connections between these and his English following. And a third reconstructs the administration of the Talbot estates in his time, examines his finances and finally assesses his profits of war. The fourth and last part is a detailed study of the economic history of the largest of the Talbot estates in Shropshire, the lordship of Blackmere or Blackmere over the whole of the later middle ages.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to various people and organisations for assistance and guidance in completing this work, not least of whom are the staff of public archives and record offices in England and France and of the University Library. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. R. M. Jeffs for his suggestions when first I started research into this subject; Miss Mary Hill, the County Archivist of Shropshire, and her assistant, Miss Marion Hill, for their patient help with the Bridgewater Papers; the Marquess of Northampton for permission to use prints of the portraits of the first Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury; and the Department of Education and Science for the financial support which enabled me not only to spend three years on research, but also to extend that research to France. My greatest debt is to my supervisor, Dr. Charles Ross, for his constant inspiration and vigilant guidance. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife for her unsparing and invaluable help over several months in the final preparation of this dissertation.

These debts of gratitude apart, I certify that the following pages are the product of my own independent work.

14 September 1968

AT Pollard

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Abbreviations

AN	Archives Nationales
J	Trésor des Chartes, Layettes
JJ	Trésor des Chartes, Registres
K	Momuments Historiques
Basin	Thomas Basin, <u>Histoire de Charles VII</u> , ed. C. Samaran, 1933-34
Beaucourt	G. du Fresne de Beaucourt, <u>Histoire de Charles VII</u> , 1881-91
<u>BIHR</u>	<u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</u>
BM	British Museum
	Ad Ch Additional Charters
	Ad Ms Additional Manuscripts
BN	Bibliothèque National
	Ms Fr Manuscrits Français
	PO Pièces Originales
	Clair Clairambault
Bourgeois	<u>Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris, 1405-1449</u> , ed. A. Tuetey, 1881
BP	Shropshire Record Office, Bridgewater Papers
Burne	A. H. Burne, <u>The Agincourt War</u> , 1956
<u>Cal Pap Reg</u>	<u>Calendar of Papal Registers, Papal Letters</u>
<u>Cat Anc Deeds</u>	<u>Catalogue of Ancient Deeds</u>
<u>CCR</u>	<u>Calendar of Close Rolls</u>
<u>CFR</u>	<u>Calendar of Fine Rolls</u>
Chartier	Jean Chartier, <u>Chronique de Charles VII</u> , ed. M. Vallet de Viriville, 1839
<u>CNR</u>	Calendar of Norman Rolls in <u>Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Records</u> , vols xli, xlii
<u>CP</u>	<u>The Complete Peerage</u>



<u>CPR</u>	<u>Calendar of Patent Rolls</u>
Devon, <u>Issues</u>	F. Devon, <u>Issues of the Exchequer</u> , 1837
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
<u>EHR</u>	<u>English Historical Review</u>
<u>Econ HR</u>	<u>Economic History Review</u>
Ellis, <u>Letters</u>	<u>Original Letters Illustrative of English History</u> , ed. H. Ellis, 2nd Series, 1827
<u>Feodera</u>	T. Rymer, <u>Feodera, Conventiones, Litterae, etc.</u> , 1704-35
Gruel	G. Gruel, <u>Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont</u> , ed. A. le Vavas seur, 1890
Hall	E. Hall, <u>Chronicle</u> , 1809
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
Monstrelet	<u>Chronicles of Monstrelet</u> , trans. T. Johnes, 1853
Paston Letters	<u>The Paston Letters</u> , ed. J. Gairdner, 1904
<u>Proc Priv Counc</u>	<u>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England</u> , ed. N. H. Nicolas, 1834
PRO	Public Record Office C       Chancery E       Exchequer KB      King's Bench SC      Special Collections
Ramsay	J. H. Ramsay, <u>Lancaster and York</u> , 1892
<u>Rot Parl</u>	<u>Rotuli Parliamentorum</u>
<u>Rot Pat Claus Hib</u>	<u>Rotulorum Patentium et Clausorum Cancellariae Hiberniae Calendarium</u> , i, Part 1, 1828
<u>THAS</u>	<u>Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society</u>

<u>TRHS</u>	<u>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</u>
<u>TSAS</u>	<u>Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society</u>
Waurin	<u>Receuil des Croniques par Jehan de Waurin</u> , ed. Sir William Hardy, 1864-84
<u>Wars of the English</u>	<u>Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry VI</u> , ed. J. Stevenson, 1864
Wedgwood	J. C. Wedgwood, <u>History of Parliament</u> , vol 1, Biographies, 1936



John, first Earl of Shrewsbury

(from the collection of the Marquess of Northampton)





Margaret, first Countess of Shrewsbury  
(from the collection of the Marquess of Northampton)







## INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

On 19 January 1377 Gilbert, 3rd Lord Talbot of Goodrich, settled for the rent of a rose rendered at midsummer a number of his manors in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire on his sixteen year old son, Richard, and his bride, Ankaret Le Strange, sister and eventual heiress of the 5th Lord Strange of Blackmere.<sup>(1)</sup> This union of two lesser baronies was the crucial step in the rise of the Talbot family into the leading ranks of the peerage. It extended the territorial power of the family along the length of the Welsh borders from the plains of Cheshire to beyond the estuary of the river Severn, and it led eventually, after the gathering in of more estates, to elevation to the Earldom of Shrewsbury in the person of Richard and Ankaret's second son, John. In John's time the family was ranked, according to his declaration for the income tax of 1436, among the twelve wealthiest of the realm, enjoying estates, annuities and offices in England approximately equal to the Earldoms of Northumberland, Salisbury and Westmorland.<sup>(2)</sup> Although its wealth could not compare with the Earldoms of Stafford, Suffolk and Warwick, or the Duchies of Norfolk and York, it was nevertheless firmly established in the ranks of the greater peerage, from which eminence, as the premier Earldom today, it has never since fallen.

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(1) Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, lx, (1938), p292.

(2) H. L. Gray, 'Incomes from land in England in 1436', EHR, xlix, (1934), p615.



The purpose of this study is to explore the expansion, retention and exercise of the territorial, political and military power of the family in the crucial century of its history, 1399-1485. Apart from the interest of the history for its own sake, there is one factor that particularly commends this. This is that no full study has as yet been made of a family representative of the greater peerage in the fifteenth century. The Lords Hungerford and Grey of Ruthin in the later middle ages have been the subjects of unpublished theses, but these, as their authors claimed, were of the lesser baronage.<sup>(1)</sup> Biographies of individual peers have been written and aspects, notably the estates and finances, of others as wealthy and wealthier than the Talbots have been explored,<sup>(2)</sup> but as yet no wider scale has been tackled. In the respects to which the Talbots were typical, it is hoped that this work will do a little to fill the gap.

---

(1) J. L. Kirby, *The Hungerford Family in the Later Middle Ages*, (London M.A.) 1939; R. I. Jack, *The Lords Grey of Ruthin, 1325-1490: a study of the lesser baronage* (London PhD.) 1961.

(2) R. J. Mitchell, John Tiptoft; C. W. C. Oman, Warwick the Kingmaker; Paul Murray Kendall, Warwick the Kingmaker. J. M. W. Bean, The Estates of the Percy Family, 1416-1537; T. B. Pugh, The Marcher Lordships of Wales, 1415-1536 (Stafford family); J. T. Rosenthal, 'The estates and finances of Richard, Duke of York', Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, ii, 1965, pp117-204; C. D. Ross, 'The Estates and Finances of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick', Dugdale Society Occasional Papers, 12, 1956.

There are several reasons why this study has been restricted to the fifteenth century. It was crucial to the family not only because it witnessed its rise to prominence, but also because the family survived it. By coincidence the years 1399 to 1485, which span the England of Lancaster and York, also define a clear limit in the history of the family. Henry IV came to the throne three years after the death of Richard, the fourth Lord, during the brief minority of Gilbert, the fifth, and the accession of Henry VII coincided with the end of the minority of George, the ninth Lord and fourth Earl. In addition, this was the one period, spanning three generations, in which its centre of gravity lay in Shropshire, the county from which the title of its Earldom was taken. In the fourteenth century its roots lay in Herefordshire; in the sixteenth century they were transferred to the region of Sheffield and north Derbyshire. It was between 1399 and 1485 only that the family was first and foremost a Shropshire family.

The subject has been approached in four parts, in which aspects studied become progressively more specialised in scope. The first part traces the genealogical and political history of the family in three chapters. The first chapter recounts the history of Lady Ankaret Talbot and her children from the death of Lord Richard to the accession of Lord John in 1422, and traces the formation of his inheritance; the second



continues the history of the family and the inheritance until 1460 and the third considers the fortunes of the second and third Earls in the period known as the Wars of the Roses. In some respects this first part is a preliminary survey to the second and third parts, which concentrate on the dominant member of the family, John, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury (c1387-1453). The second part is a narrative in two chapters of his public career in England, Ireland and France from 1414 until his death. The third part examines the material bases of his power in mid-century. In this, one chapter considers the composition and influence of his affinity in England and, in particular, Shropshire; a second analyses the composition and organisation of his retinues of war in Normandy and their connection with his affinity in England, and a third examines the administration of his estates, his finances and his profits of war. The final part is a study of the economic history of the principal and largest of the Shropshire estates, the lordship of Blackmere, over the period 1377-1522. Thus, although the whole history of the family is considered, emphasis is placed upon the person of the first Earl and the county of Shropshire.

In addition to the materials generally available for the study of baronial history in the major public collections, this work has drawn on two groups of sources. The first is the scattered documents which

form the military and financial records of the English occupation of Normandy. The majority of these are now in the major French collections in the Archives Nationales and the Bibliotheque Nationale, but they are supplemented by documents in the British Museum and the Public Record Office. These provide the basis for the study of the composition and organisation of John Talbot's retinues of war and their relationship with his affinity in England. They also supply the basic evidence on his wages of war and give much incidental information on his activities in France. The second group is the fairly full collection of estate accounts for the lordship of Blackmere between 1331 and 1522, which form part of the Bridgewater Papers deposited in the Shropshire Record Office. These accounts, mostly those of the receiver, bailiff and rent collectors of the lordship, concentrated in two main periods, 1377-1437 and 1466-1522, not only provide the basis of the study of Blackmere, but also contain valuable information on the administration of all the Talbot estates. In addition they supply interesting biographical detail of the family, its officers and its local connections.

The history of the family before the fifteenth century should first be summarised. The Talbots came to England with the Conqueror. Although

little is known of the early Norman family, the name has been traced back to Normandy and a Geoffrey Talbot is to be found, according to Domesday, holding the manor of Liston, Essex. It appears that the family did not establish itself on the borders of Wales until the reign of King Stephen, for on the accession of Henry II, the first Sir Richard Talbot is to be found seated at Eccleswall, Herefordshire. In reward for his good services to Henry, Sir Richard was granted the neighbouring manor of Linton. But for the next one hundred and fifty years his descendants remained lesser and somewhat obscure landed knights of southern Herefordshire.<sup>(1)</sup>

The troubled reign of Edward II saw the first advance in the family fortunes and it was then also that they first became linked with the house of Lancaster. Both Sir Gilbert Talbot and his son, Richard, were followers of Thomas of Lancaster and, indeed, were captured at Boroughbridge in 1322. After 1326 they successively helped Mortimer against Despenser and, in 1330, Edward III and Henry of Lancaster against Mortimer. The opposition to the Despensers arose out of competition for the hand and patrimony of Elizabeth Comyn, heiress of

---

(1) CP, xii, Pt 1, p606.



Goodrich and Painswick.<sup>(1)</sup> Support for Mortimer won Elizabeth and her estates; support for the King and Lancaster won elevation to the peerage for both father and son - Gilbert as Lord of Eccleswall, Richard as Lord of Goodrich.<sup>(2)</sup> Elizabeth Comyn was thus the first of three heiresses to mark the major steps in the rise of the family. Her inheritance established it in the lesser peerage of the southern borders of Wales.

Lord Gilbert died in 1346 and Lord Richard, who succeeded to his father's title, died in 1356. His son, Gilbert, was the first to hold the Comyn lands in his own right. He married Pernel Butler, daughter of James, 1st Earl of Ormond. She brought no great territorial additions to the inheritance, but, as a great-granddaughter of Edward I, she did provide royal blood to enhance the family's prestige.<sup>(3)</sup> The second marriage of territorial significance was that of Gilbert's son, Richard,

(1) She was a niece and eventual co-heiress of Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke. Goodrich and its castle high over the banks of the river Wye was the centre of the hundred of Archenfield. The manors of Moreton and Whaddon were part of the lordship of Painswick on the Cotswold edge on the other side of the Severn in Gloucestershire.

(2) CP, xii, Pt 1, p606.

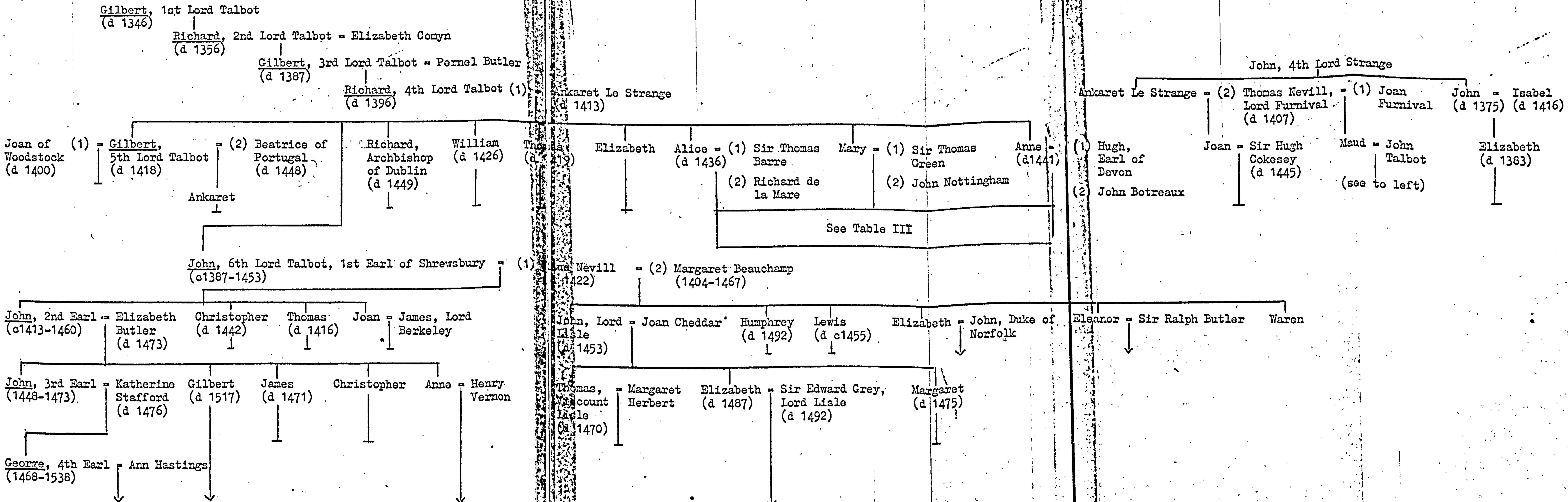
(3) Her mother was Elizabeth Bohun, daughter of the 4th Earl of Hereford and the Princess Elizabeth. She did bring the addition of a moiety of Lydney (Gloucestershire) and possibly Weston Turville (Buckinghamshire), known on occasion as 'Butler's manor', to the inheritance (Gloucestershire Notes and Queries, ii, p495).

to Ankaret Le Strange. When they were married, Ankaret was heiress to the barony of Le Strange then held by her niece, Elizabeth, a child of four. This child died in 1383 and Richard and Ankaret entered her estates. When Richard's father died four years later, the union of the two baronies was achieved. Their estates lay in a line along the borders of Wales from Marbury in south Cheshire, through Whitchurch in north Shropshire, Corfham (near Ludlow) in south Shropshire, Credenhill, near Hereford, and Goodrich on the Wye in south Herefordshire to Painswick on the Cotswold edge in south Gloucestershire. Richard was thus made one of the more important of the border barons and his family was brought to the brink of an even more splendid future.



TABLE I

## The Family Tree



PART ONE

THE FAMILY AND INHERITANCE, 1399-1485

## I

THE FAMILY AND THE INHERITANCE, 1399-1422

The fifteenth century opened ominously for the Talbot family. Richard, Lord Talbot, died on 8 or 9 September 1396 having enjoyed his enhanced position for only nine years.<sup>(1)</sup> He could hardly have died at a more unfortunate moment, for he left his widow and at least nine children (all under age) to face the disturbances of a change of regime and rebellion in Wales. These dominated the affairs of the family for several years.

Lady Ankaret was fortunate, however, in having a considerable part of the combined Talbot and Le Strange inheritance in her possession. In addition to all the Le Strange estates (including Corfham, Wrockwardine and Ashton Gifford, which had been occupied by her mother as dower until her death shortly after Richard), she held Eccleswall and the other manors in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire with which she and Richard had been settled by her father-in-law in 1377, and Painswick which had been enfeoffed to use by Richard.<sup>(2)</sup> The only estates to fall into the King's hand were Goodrich (with Penyard Chase) and Bampton, but from

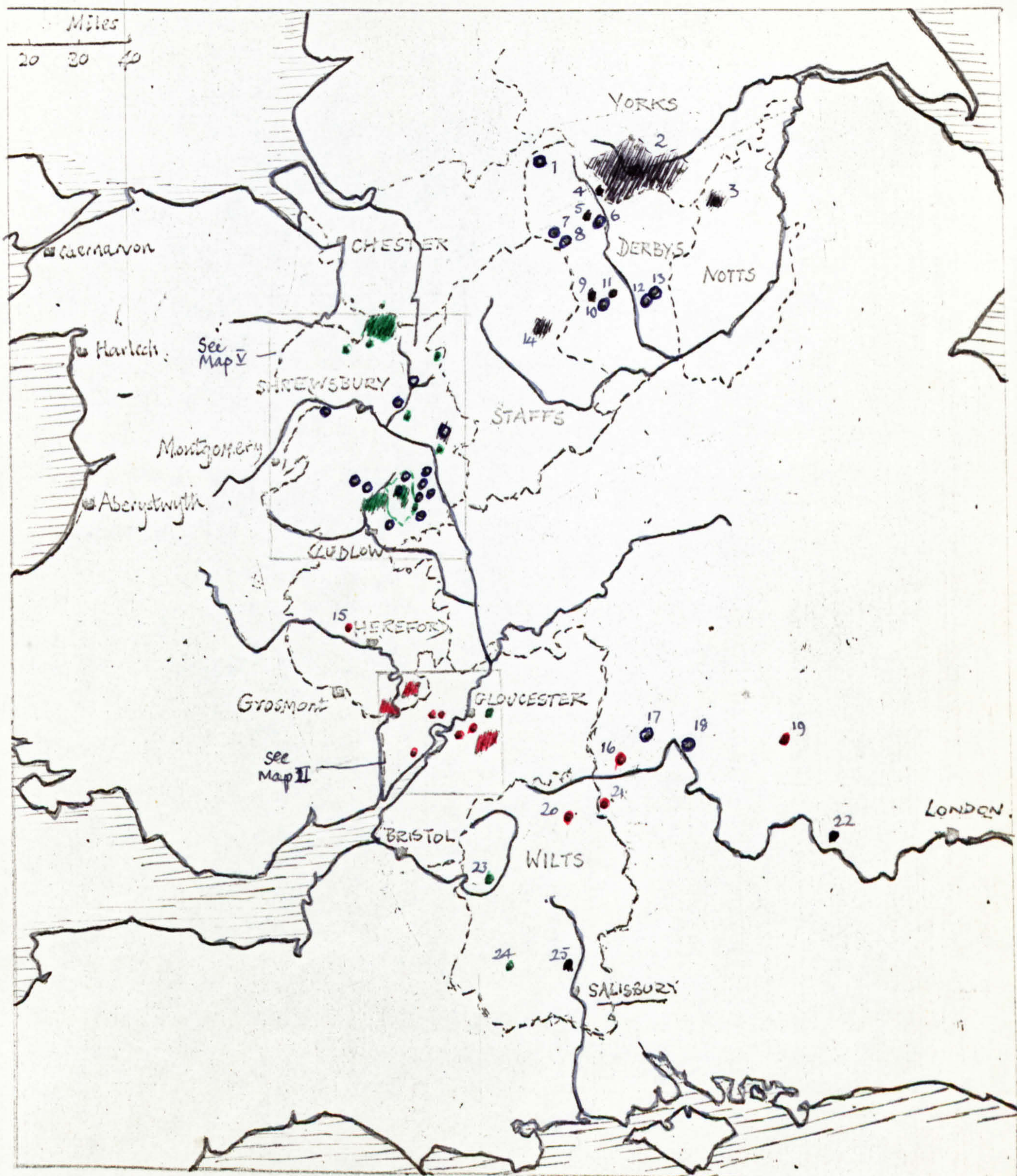
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(1) CP, xii, p617.

(2) Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, lx (1938), p292; CPR, 1396-99, p38; CCR, 1396-99, p31.



Map I: the Talbot estates in the fifteenth century



- — Estates from the Talbot inheritance
- — Estates from the Le Strange inheritance
- — Estates from the Furnival inheritance
- — later acquisitions

} key overleaf.



Key to Map I

1	Glossop
2	Sheffield, including Bradfield, Chapeltown, Ecclesfield, Handsworth, Tinsley, Treeton, and Whiston
3	Worksop
4	Bamford
5	Eyam
6	Bubnell
7	Chelmorton
8	Monyash
9	Brasington
10	Carsington
11	Middleton
12	Crich
13	Windfield
14	Alton
15	Credenhill
16	Bampton
17	North Leigh
18	Wolvercote
19	Weston Turville
20	Swindon
21	Shrivenham
22	Farnham
23	Ashton Gifford
24	Broughton Gifford
25	Wilsford

these too she received as dower the customary third part.<sup>(1)</sup> In addition the manors in Shrivenham, Swindon and Lydney had been granted to Joan, daughter of Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, on the occasion of her betrothal to Ankaret's eldest son Gilbert.<sup>(2)</sup>

It was as well that Ankaret possessed this large estate, for she had a large family to support. Gilbert was aged thirteen or more on his father's death and, although as a minor he became a ward of the King, he nevertheless appears to have stayed in his mother's household until he joined the household of Henry, Prince of Wales, in 1403.<sup>(3)</sup> Ankaret's second son, John, was born, "as all concurring indication do avouch", at

- 
- (1) The keeping of the two-thirds of Goodrich was committed to (1) Thomas, Earl of Nottingham, for £80 per annum on 20 May 1397 (CFR, 1391-99, pp211-2), (2) John Scudamore of Keynchurch for £53/6/8d. on 18 February 1398 (Ibid, pp249, 282), (3) Sir Hugh de Waterton on 4 November 1399 for £106/13/4d. (CFR, 1399-1405, p17). The two-thirds of Bampton were committed to Thomas Stanley, clerk, for £35/14/2½d. on 12 June 1397 (CFR, 1391-99, pp213, 290).
- (2) 20 May 1392. It is not certain when the marriage took place but Joan died on 6 August 1400 and in letters fine of 22 March 1401 she was referred to as Gilbert's late wife. After her death Shrivenham and Swindon were committed to Thomas Nevill, Lord Furnival. Lydney, one of the manors settled in 1377, reverted to Lady Ankaret (CFR, 1399-1405, p120; CCR, 1399-1402, p261; CP, xii, p619).
- (3) BP 81/1399-1400, 75/1401-02. There are references in these accounts to items spent on his maintenance.

Blackmere<sup>(1)</sup> in c1387<sup>(2)</sup> and also remained in her household until 1404, as did her other sons, Richard, William and Thomas, the youngest of whom, Thomas, must have only been a baby when his father died.<sup>(3)</sup> The eldest of her daughters and perhaps the eldest of all the children was Elizabeth, who was old enough to play a fairly active part in the affairs of her mother's household between 1399 and 1403.<sup>(4)</sup> Elizabeth is not known to have married and it is possible that she may have taken holy orders. Of the other daughters, Mary married (1) Sir Thomas Green of Norton Davy, Northamptonshire, in or before 1401 and (2) John Nottingham before 5 July 1419.<sup>(5)</sup> Anne married (1) Sir Hugh Courtenay, later Earl

- 
- (1) So Thomas Fuller in his Worthies of England (ed P. A. Nuttall), iii, p62.
- (2) The legend grew that John lived to eighty. This could not have been so. In 1422 he was said to be over thirty, but he was probably of age when he took his seat in the House of Lords in 1409. He was still in his mother's household at Christmas 1401 (BP 75/1401-02) but held his first command and established his own household at Montgomery in 1404 (PRO, E 101/44/6). This suggests that he was at least sixteen and possibly one or two years older in 1404, which gives 1386-88 as the period of his own birth.
- (3) He attended his first mass in the year 1401-02 (BP 75/1401-02).
- (4) BP 81 and 75, 1399-1403.
- (5) Green was paid £15 from the issues of Wrockwardine in 1400-01 as part of his 'marritagium'. He died in 1417 (BP 87/1400-01 (valor); CFR, 1413-22, p196; CCR, 1419-22, p31.)



of Devon in 1412 and (2) John Botreaux by 5 November 1432.<sup>(1)</sup> Finally, Alice married (1) Sir Thomas Barre of Rotherwas, near Hereford, before 1414 and (2) Richard de la Mare.<sup>(2)</sup> Over the turn of the century the household had its headquarters at Blackmere, although the family does not appear to have spent a great deal of time there, one of the few occasions of which there is clear evidence being Christmas 1401.<sup>(3)</sup>

Lady Ankaret probably met the change of regime in 1399 with equanimity, for Richard Talbot had maintained the family connection with the house of Lancaster.<sup>(4)</sup> But with most of her land so near the mountains, the rebellion in Wales must have been far more disturbing. It was probably this that really committed her to Henry IV. There were clearly advantages to be found in a second marriage to someone high in the King's

(1) Sir Hugh Courtenay was the second son of Edward, Earl of Devon. Items spent on the occasion of his marriage to Anne are attached to the Blackmere Household account of 1411-12. Hugh succeeded his father on 29 June 1419, but died three years later (16 June 1422). Anne and her brother John were granted the wardship and marriage of her young son Thomas in 1423 (CFR, 1422-30, pp58, 62). On 5 November 1432 she purchased a licence for her marriage to Botreaux (CPR, 1429-36, p250). She died on 16 January 1441.

(2) Barre was paid a fee of £1 by Ankaret, Lady Talbot, in 1410-11. His son by Alice was born in 1415 and John Talbot was the godfather. He died in 1421. Alice and her second husband, Richard de la Mare, were granted the manor of Credenhill by John Talbot, which they occupied until they both died in 1436.

(3) BP 75/1401-02.

(4) In 1387, for instance, he had served with John of Gaunt in Spain (CP, xii, p617).

favour. She could not have found a wiser choice than Thomas Nevill, Lord Furnival, himself a widower and one of Henry's most trusted supporters. He was the second son of Sir John Nevill of Raby and the brother of Ralph, Earl of Westmorland. His first wife had been Joan, only daughter and heiress of William de Furnival, in right of whom he held the barony of Furnival centred on the lordship of Sheffield. Ankaret and he were married before 4 July 1401.<sup>(1)</sup> One daughter was born to them, Joan, who married Sir Hugh Cokesey of Willey, Worcestershire. To Furnival, of course, Ankaret's wealth was an obvious commendation. She, however, was clearly not prepared to allow him the use of her estates merely for current favour at court and a promise of protection. Her terms included a double marriage, by which in exchange for her own hand Furnival gave the hand of his daughter and sole heiress, Maud, to Ankaret's second son, John.<sup>(2)</sup> The capture of the Furnival inheritance for John was a far more tangible and significant benefit than the hope of protection.

Lord Furnival came to Shropshire in the summer of 1401 both to serve the King and protect his bride's estates. He established his 'foreign'

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(1) CFR, 1399-1401, p51. The King probably knew of the marriage on 22 March when he granted the custody of Shrivenham and Swindon to Furnival (CFR, 1399-1405, p120).

(2) CFR, 1405-13, p74.

household at Blackmere on 16 June and it remained there at least until 25 September 1402.<sup>(1)</sup> In September 1402 he took part in the King's disastrous expedition into Wales and, although he received £12 from the Exchequer for his wages of war, he paid almost £50 to his soldiers from the issues of Blackmere.<sup>(2)</sup> He was still in Shropshire in 1403 and undoubtedly fought beside the King at Shrewsbury, for immediately after the battle Hotspur's body was given to him and buried at Whitchurch, only to be disinterred for display in Shrewsbury.<sup>(3)</sup> The battle proved to be a major step in his career, for he was rewarded with several Percy offices and estates, summoned to the great council, made joint Treasurer of War, and finally promoted to Treasurer of England, before 12 December 1404, a

- (1) BP 75/1401-02. In this year the Receiver of Blackmere was also 'Custodius hospiciis forinseci de Domino de Neville'. This title suggests that Furnival's 'foreign' household, like that of Richard, Earl of Warwick twenty years later, travelled with him, whilst his 'inner' household stayed at Sheffield (see C. D. Ross, 'The Household Account of Elizabeth Berkeley, Countess of Warwick, 1420-21', Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, lxx (1951), p84). Walter Woodburn, the keeper, was responsible for the household finances from 16 June 1401 to 25 September 1402, and for the entire year the finances of Furnival's household and Blackmere lordship were integrated.
- (2) He served in the company of the Earl of Arundel. According to the account of J. H. Wylie, Henry IV, i, p285, Arundel operated from Hereford and the King from Shrewsbury. An order was sent out on 31 July for troops to meet the King at Shrewsbury (Feodera, vii, p271), but on 24 August Furnival was at Shrawardine, six miles west of Shrewsbury, in the company of Arundel, for payment was made by the keeper of his household to a servant 'existendi in quadam villam iuxta Shrawardyn quo tempore Dominus fuit ibidem cum Comitibus Arundelli in septimo Sancti Bartholomew'. Arundel must certainly have set out from Shrewsbury.
- (3) J. H. Wylie, op cit, p364.



position he held until his death in March 1407.<sup>(1)</sup>

He was less successful as a protector of the Talbot estates in Shropshire, for he had left the county when Blackmere and presumably Corfham, like most of Shropshire, were sacked in a series of raids in 1404. Blackmere was so completely devastated that even four years later some parts of it were still in a state of ruin. Despite the protection of Goodrich castle, the family's Archenfield lands shared the same fate.<sup>(2)</sup> The raids of 1404 gave the Talbot boys something of a personal score to settle with the Welsh. Both Gilbert and John Talbot received their first blooding in the drawn-out war against Owain Glyn Dwr. As soon as they were old enough they were both thrown into the fight and the need first to defeat the Welsh and then to police the marches dominated their youths. For John, particularly, it was the beginning of fifty years of almost continuous warfare.

Gilbert apparently first saw action under his step-father in the disastrous campaign of September 1402, for he was specially provided with

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- (1) CP, v, p589. Immediately after the battle he was given the charge of Newcastle, and in December made keeper of Berwick, Alnwick and Warkworth. It is interesting to note that Furnival had been in touch with Henry Percy, for on 18 May 1402 he sent a messenger to him at Denbigh (BP 75/1401-02).
- (2) J. H. Wylie, op cit, i, pp433, 448; ii, p9; BP 81/1405-06, 1407-08. On 21 April 1404 the borough of Shrewsbury informed Westminster that over one-third of the county had already been laid waste and by the end of the year the whole of Western Shropshire was 'burnt, wasted, destroyed and uninhabited'. For further details of the sacking of Blackmere see below Ch IX. p 359.



armour and a horse for the occasion.<sup>(1)</sup> But early in the following year he joined the household of Henry, Prince of Wales, with his own retinue of two lances and twenty archers.<sup>(2)</sup> It is probable, therefore, that he fought at the battle of Shrewsbury, particularly since three days later, on 24 July, he was made Justice of Chester in succession to Henry Percy.<sup>(3)</sup> Throughout the following year he was in constant attendance on the Prince. And by 19 October 1404, when his indenture was renewed, his retinue had grown to thirty-six men.<sup>(4)</sup>

John Talbot, too, began his military career in the service of Lord Furnival, but not until 1404, when the situation was at its worst. With the Prince of Wales holding the South, Furnival was appointed Captain of the key fortresses of Montgomery, 'Cause and Bishop's Castle in the central borders. He appointed his untried son-in-law as his deputy and actual commander. Talbot took up his duties with garrisons of 185 men in December and was there until 25 April 1407, when he was promoted to the full command in succession to his father-in-law.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) EP 75/1401-02. The horse, purchased from the parson of Whitchurch, cost £10.

(2) J. H. Wylie, op cit, iv, Appendix F, pp242-5, account of the Household of Henry, Prince of Wales, 17 April 1403-20 July 1404.

(3) Deputy Keeper's Report, 36, Appendix ii, p464.

(4) J. H. Wylie, op cit, iv, Appendix F.

(5) PRO, E 101/44/6, 14. His troops, himself included, were first mustered on 1 December 1404. The appointment in 1407 was for one year.

But by then the Welsh were at last under control. On 11 March 1405 Gilbert Talbot, with only a small force, had caught and scattered a far larger number as they were about to descend on Grosmont.<sup>(1)</sup> Two months later the Prince of Wales gained a far more substantial victory at Usk.<sup>(2)</sup> The English forces, the brothers Talbot included, ranged along the marches, henceforth concentrated on policing the marches and the tedious, but necessary, pacification of the Principality. The main obstacles to the complete reduction of Wales were the strongholds of Aberystwyth and Harlech, which had fallen into rebel hands in 1404. In the summer of 1407, therefore, the Prince of Wales collected an army of over two thousand at Hereford, and with John and a contingent from Montgomery and, probably, Gilbert in his ranks, he marched across to the coast at Aberystwyth. Although the castle treated to surrender on 12 September, Glyn Dwr managed to relieve the garrison and the expedition returned to England empty handed.<sup>(3)</sup> Nevertheless, in the following summer Henry set out again, this time successfully, even though the castle held out until late in the season. Pressing on, Henry sent the brothers Talbot up to Harlech with nine hundred men. After a rigorous winter siege, that

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(1) J. H. Wylie, op cit, ii, p171 ff; Ellis, Letters, p38. Henry, Prince of Wales, wrote to his father informing him of Talbot's victory.

(2) J. H. Wylie, ibid.

(3) Ibid, iii, p3. Gilbert was still in the Prince's household on 7 July 1407 (p50). Musters were taken of the force in Hereford on 10 June.

castle fell to them in January 1409.<sup>(1)</sup> The rebellion was at last crushed. However, with Glyn Dwr still at large, the Prince took no risks and kept both Gilbert and John in North Wales. In the summer John was apparently appointed Captain of Caernarvon and he garrisoned the town with two hundred men.<sup>(2)</sup> It was probably not until 1410 that either of them had time to enjoy their estates.<sup>(3)</sup>

Gilbert had been given livery of his lands on 9 September 1403,<sup>(4)</sup> but with well over half his inheritance still in his mother's hands, his income was very small.<sup>(5)</sup> Indeed, his expenses in the service of the Prince of Wales so outstretched his resources that on 13 February 1406 he was granted £200 from the Exchequer in assistance. His financial

- (1) Ibid, pp266-7. Wylie also states that Gilbert went to Ireland in company of Thomas, Duke of Clarence, in the summer of 1408. His evidence is Gilbert's appointment of attorneys to represent him in that country in November 1407 (CPR, 1405-08, p378). Since Gilbert was definitely at the siege of Harlech (see Proc Priv Counc, ii, p139) Wylie's statement must be discounted. On the other hand, when new attorneys were appointed, 26 November 1409, they were to hold their powers until the arrival of the Nominator. But there is no evidence that Gilbert actually ever went (CPR, 1408-13, p149).
- (2) J. E. Tyler, Henry of Monmouth, i, p241. He quotes a petition of 2 Henry V that states that Furnival was "on his road towards Caernarvon there to abide and resist the malice of Owyn Glendower" (my italics). Gilbert, Lord Talbot, remained with 240 men to garrison North Wales (J. H. Wylie, op cit, iii, p266).
- (3) The first record of John being at Sheffield is in November 1410 (BP 75/1410-11). His public career after 1410 is taken up in Ch III.
- (4) CPR, 1401-05, p262.
- (5) See above p9.



plight appears to have been considerable, for he claimed that during his minority he had only 100 marks for his maintenance after 9 March 1401, and for four and a half years before then, nothing.<sup>(1)</sup> Since he was then maintained in his mother's household,<sup>(2)</sup> he was probably exaggerating the extent of his poverty, but there can be little doubt that, during the reign of Henry IV, Gilbert was in some difficulty. In 1408 his prospects were further diminished when his mother devised the lordship of Corfham to his brother John.<sup>(3)</sup> Since John had already entered the barony of Furnival (he and Maud were granted seisin on 3 May 1407)<sup>(4)</sup> it seems likely that he was the better endowed of the two.

Lady Ankaret had her other sons to provide for. Richard entered the Church. On 22 October 1399 he was collated to a portion of the prebend of Bromyard in Hereford Cathedral,<sup>(5)</sup> and in January 1404 he was presented to the living of Ludlow to support him while he studied for a year. In the next eleven years he was well provided with benefices, culminating in

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(1) CPR, 1399-1401, p443; 1405-08, p113. He was paid £120 of this on 3 December (Devon, Issues, p302). See also J. H. Wylie, op cit, ii, p412, for his complaints of indebtedness. He was first summoned to Parliament in 1406.

(2) See above p10.

(3) CCR, 1413-19, p24. In this year Ankaret enfeoffed Corfham to use so that her feoffees therein could convey the lordship to herself with the remainder to John.

(4) CFR, 1405-13, p74.

(5) Registrum Johannis Trefuant, Canterbury and York Society, xx, p183.



1415 with his election as Dean of Chichester.<sup>(1)</sup> But it was his brother John's position as Lieutenant of Ireland which opened the way to higher offices. In 1416 John procured his election as Archbishop of Armagh, but Richard failed to secure confirmation. In 1417, however, the Archbishopric of Dublin fell vacant and this time there was no hindrance to his election and consecration.<sup>(2)</sup> The rest of his career was spent embroiled in Irish affairs and these are discussed in Chapter III following.

It was left to Lord Gilbert to provide his brother William with the manor of Marbury, a member of the lordship of Blackmere, before Michaelmas 1414.<sup>(3)</sup> Sir William Talbot fought at Agincourt,<sup>(4)</sup> returned to France

(1) They were as follows: 1401, Prebend of Pubton Major; 26 March 1407, canon of Hereford; 26 May 1407, exchanged Ludlow with Henry Myle, precentor of Hereford; 4 March 1404, licence to procure a maximum of two benefices in the sees of York, Lincoln and Salisbury; 1410, the free chapel of Willey and Kingsland; 1412, Prebend of Fridayhope in York Cathedral; 26 April 1407, a portion in Ledbury church called Overhall; 24 April 1413, exchanged Kingsland for Old Radnor and Old Radnor for Hentles (Registrum Roberti Mascall, ibid, xxi, pp135, 170, 186, 188, 189; CPR, 1405-08, p328; 1408-13, p279; 1413-16, p14; DNB, lv, p330).

(2) Cal Pap Reg: Letters, vii, pp45, 57; DNB, lv, p330 ff.

(3) BP 75/1414-15.

(4) Proc Priv Counc, iii, p124. In 1423 he petitioned for payment of four lances and two archers retained by him in 1415. See also N. H. Nicolas, The Battle of Agincourt, p351, for this retinue.

in 1417, possibly in Gilbert's retinue, and served there continuously at least until 1421.<sup>(1)</sup> He was back in England by October 1422 and there remained until his death at the hands of servants of Joan, Lady of Abergavenry.<sup>(2)</sup> Thomas, the youngest, was more favoured by his mother, for she provided him with the manors of Cheswardine and Wrockwardine. He was in his brother William's company at Agincourt and probably fought at the battle of the Seine in the following year, for he was retained in May 1416 to go to France for the relief of Harfleur.<sup>(3)</sup> He was clearly quite closely attached to his brother John, for in the same year he was a witness to a deed of Hugh, Lord Burnell, settling lands on his young nephew John at the time of the latter's betrothal to Hugh's granddaughter Katherine,<sup>(4)</sup> and in 1418 he accompanied both his brothers, John and Richard to Ireland.<sup>(5)</sup> He probably returned with John in 1419, but he died, like William, without issue, before

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- (1) He was Gilbert's Lieutenant in Caen castle in June 1418. His own retinue was mustered from July 1419 until December 1420. He possibly took over the Captaincy of his brother's men after his death in October 1418 (CNR, i, p714; ii, pp322, 324, 326, 373, 392-3).
- (2) CPR, 1422-29, pp35, 317-8. For details see below p 141. His will was proved on 17 January (E. F. Jacob, Register Henry Chichele, ii, p325).
- (3) PRO, E101/69/8/549.
- (4) Cat Anc Deeds, ii, C2398, pp515-6.
- (5) CPR, 1416-22, p150.



17 October.<sup>(1)</sup> The lands granted to both of them hence reverted to the main inheritance.

Lady Ankaret died in 1413. She had weathered the storm in the early years of the reign of Henry IV and had launched her children, particularly her favourite John, successfully into the world. On her death Gilbert succeeded to his full inheritance with the exception of three estates devised to his brothers. Although he had spent years of service in the household of Henry V, when Prince of Wales, and was clearly trusted by him, he received no great political or military promotion after 1413. This suggests that proven loyalty rather than outstanding ability commended him most to the new King. His first command as joint Captain of the fleet with Sir Thomas Carew was given him on 18 February 1415.<sup>(2)</sup> But shortly after this he was retained by Henry to serve in the expedition to France. He was consequently at Southampton in early July with his retinue of thirty lances and ninety archers.<sup>(3)</sup> However, he did not sail with the King, for on 5 July he was appointed to treat with Owain Glyn Dwr, with a general brief, pre-

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(1) Ibid, p332. After his death Wrockwardine was granted to William and Cheswardine to Gilbert's widow, Beatrice, during the minority of his daughter, Ankaret (CFR, 1413-22, p274).

(2) Feodera, ix, p202; CPR, 1413-16, p294. They were deputies of Thomas, Earl of Dorset, the Admiral of England.

(3) J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, Henry V, i, p467; N. H. Nicolas, op cit, p345.

sumably, to keep watch on Wales in the King's absence.<sup>(1)</sup> While at Southampton, on 5 August, he served on the jury of Peers that passed sentence on the Earl of Cambridge and Lord Scrope.<sup>(2)</sup> In April 1416 he was employed in a minor diplomatic role, being sent to Calais to associate himself with the Captain in welcoming the Emperor Sigismund, and in August and September he was at Sandwich in the King's company before he crossed to Calais.<sup>(3)</sup>

The last year of Lord Gilbert's life was spent in Normandy. He joined the 1417 expedition with a retinue of four hundred men.<sup>(4)</sup> He took part in the siege of Caen and on 1 October was appointed Captain-General of the marches of Normandy. In this capacity he led a raid into the Cotentin, but on his return was caught by the tide in the mouth of the Vire and only escaped with the loss of all his baggage and loot. Perhaps because of this he was relieved of the command on 28 January 1418.<sup>(5)</sup> He subsequently served at the sieges of Domfront, Caudebec

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(1) CPR, 1413-16, pp342, 404. His commission was renewed on 24 February 1416 with reference to treat with Owain's son Meredith.

(2) Rot Parl, iv, pp64-7; Ramsay, pp198-99.

(3) J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, iii, p22; Proc Priv Counc, ii, p194.

(4) Vita Henrici Quinti, p32. Unfortunately Talbot is one of those few peers whose musters have not survived.

(5) J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, iii, p72-3.



and Rouen. It was before Rouen that he died, probably of disease, on 19 October 1418.<sup>(1)</sup>

Gilbert's death left but one life, that of his daughter Ankaret, between his brother John and succession to the combined inheritances of the Talbots, Le Stranges and Furnivals. However, Gilbert had taken precautions against the eventuality of an early death. His first wife, Joan of Gloucester, having died in 1400,<sup>(2)</sup> he had not married again until the beginning of the reign of Henry V, when he took as his second wife a certain Beatrice of Portugal.<sup>(3)</sup> Their daughter was born in 1416. Various enfeoffments had been made to protect the interests of his family before he sailed to Normandy in 1417; first, the lordship of Blackmere was enfeoffed to use and the title conveyed to the joint enfeoffment of himself and Beatrice;<sup>(4)</sup> second, on 1 June 1415, the

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(1) CP, xii, p618. He was Captain of Caen in June 1418 (CNR, op cit, 41, p713).

(2) See above p10.

(3) Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica, i, pp80-9. Little is known of Beatrice except that her seal bore the five crescents of the house of Pinto. She is not to be confused with the Donna Beatrice, an illegitimate daughter of the King of Portugal, who married Thomas, Earl of Arundel.

(4) Ibid; CCR, 1419-22, pp24-5. The feoffees were two senior members of his household - Roger Thirsk, Rector of Whitchurch, and John Camvill, Steward of Blackmere - and Edward Sprencheaux, or Sprengnose, of (?)Plash, Shropshire, an MP in 1416 who was retained by Talbot as a lance in 1415 (see H. T. Weyman, 'Shropshire MPs', TSAS, 4th Series, xi, Pt 1, p14; N. H. Nicolas, op cit, p345).

lordship of Painswick was enfeoffed to use, the feoffees being led by his brother Richard; and thirdly, on 15 July, the lordship of Goodrich and the manors of Eccleswall, Badgeworth, Huntley, Longhope and the Lea were also enfeoffed to use, the feoffees being led again by Richard.<sup>(1)</sup>

Unfortunately, Gilbert had not been nearly careful enough in making his arrangements to deny the King the fruits of wardship. Not only had he failed to purchase licences for his enfeoffments, he had also ignored the fact that Lady Beatrice was still an alien and thus had no rights under English law. The Crown exploited this carelessness ruthlessly. Initially it proceeded in total disregard of the enfeoffments. Orders were sent out to the Escheators to take the lands into hand and make inquisition on 1 November 1418, assessors (John Merbury and John Bridge) were appointed on 13 December and custody of the inheritance during the minority of Gilbert's heiress, Ankaret, was awarded to George Hawkstone

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(1) CCR, 1419-22, pp4, 17-8; CPR, 1416-22, p219. The feoffees included Sir William Beauchamp of Powick, Sir William Stanley and two men - James Holt and John Walsh - who both at one time acted as his deputy as Justice of Chester (CCR, 1413-19, pp519, 522; BP 85/1417-18) and in both enfeoffments, Walter Woodburn, his Receiver General (Ibid).



of Hawkstone, Shropshire, on 22 February 1419.<sup>(1)</sup> In June and July following, however, the enfeoffments to use were recognised on payment of fine and the lands involved were consequently excluded when, on 16 July, custody of the inheritance was transferred to Robert Baynham of Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire.<sup>(2)</sup> But no recognition was as yet made of the claims of Lady Beatrice either for dower or in Blackmere. This did not come until 23 October, fully a year after Gilbert's death, when

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- (1) CFR, 1413-22, pp239-40, 265-6, 268. According to his account rendered to the Exchequer, Hawkstone, Escheator of Shropshire in 1417-18, kept the custody of the Shropshire estates from the time of Gilbert's death until the grant in his favour of February 1419. During this period he delivered 11/4d. from the issues of Cheswardine and £5/5/10<sup>3</sup>d. from Blackmere. He also reported the enfeoffment in favour of Beatrice. And yet it is apparent from the Bailiff of Blackmere's account for 19 October 1418 - 20 August 1419 that Beatrice enjoyed uninterrupted occupation. Did Hawkstone's custody involve a compromise with Beatrice? He later became a councillor of John Talbot and a family connection may well have influenced his position (PRO, E368/191/222; BP 81/1418-19, 76/1424-25). In Herefordshire the feoffees' accountants, including Walter Woodburn at Eccleswall, delivered the estates to the new Escheator, Thomas de la Hay, on 4 November. At Easter following Hay delivered £17/8/4d. of the issues of the 'hundred of Irchenfield' to the Exchequer (PRO, E368/191/176, 192/189).
- (2) CFR, 1413-22, p284; CCR, 1419-22, pp4, 17; CPR, 1416-22, p219. The feoffees were fined £70 for trespasses in entering without licence. Baynham was a close neighbour of Goodrich, Longhope and Eccleswall, and probably a brother-in-law of Beatrice's Receiver General, John Abrahall (J. Maclean, 'The History of Dene Magna', Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, vi (1881-2), p131 ff).

the King relented, accepted her as a liegwoman, recognised her de facto occupation of Blackmere and Gilbert's deed of joint-enfeoffment and awarded her the customary dower of a third part of the inheritance.<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, on 14 February 1420, the custody of the remainder was transferred from Baynham to her with the wardship and marriage of her daughter. But a price was set to the King's apparent generosity. Beatrice had to pay no less than 2,500 marks, in instalments of 300 twice yearly, for the privilege.<sup>(2)</sup> The burden of this proved too much and, after the death of her daughter on 13 December 1421, she petitioned the King that the issues of the land could not support the charge. The King's pardon of the outstanding sum came on 22 March 1422,<sup>(3)</sup> a month after her brother-in-law, John Talbot, had been given seisin of the inheritance (6 February).<sup>(4)</sup> One of the reasons stated for the pardon was Beatrice's good services about the Queen, but this must have afforded little consolation.<sup>(5)</sup> The whole affair not only demonstrates the

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(1) CCR, 1419-22, pp24-5.

(2) CPR, 1416-22, p258.

(3) Ibid, p415. She should have paid 1,500 marks up to, and including, Easter 1422. Evidence of her selling stock to raise the capital can be found in the Blackmere Receiver's account of 1420-21 (BP 75/1420-21).

(4) CFR, 1413-22, p422.

(5) She is known to have been in attendance on the Queen at Eltham in the summer of 1421 (BP 75/1420-21).



Crown's attitude to a device (enfeoffments to use) which sought to circumscribe its rights of wardship,<sup>(1)</sup> but also in his treatment of the widow of one of his life long companions in arms throws an interesting sidelight on the character of Henry V.

In the background, a fairly important role seems to have been played by Beatrice's brother-in-law and the head of the family, John. James Hart, Beatrice's servant, had been sent to Normandy in December 1420 to confer with him and again to London in February 1421. In 1421 John had also drawn extensively on the lordship of Blackmere in both men and arrows for his retinue of war<sup>(2)</sup> and on 4 March 1421 he came to an interesting agreement with Beatrice, whereby she granted her entire dower, drawn from the full revenues of the manors of Bampton, Swindon, Shrivenham, Ashton and Broughton Gifford to John, who then made her his tenant therein.<sup>(3)</sup> At this time it would appear she was planning to marry Thomas Fettiplace of East Shefford, her late husband's Steward of Bampton. In the following summer the couple were in London together and

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(1) Enfeoffments to use have been studied in detail by G. A. Holmes, The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth Century England, Ch II passim, and J. M. W. Bean, The Decline of English Feudalism, Chs Three and Four passim.

(2) BP 75/1420-21.

(3) CCR, 1447-54, pp11-12.

were married after a few months.<sup>(1)</sup> She was preparing to quit all her claims in the Talbot inheritance, for after the death of the child, Ankaret (which appears to have been expected), she surrendered Blackmere to John as well. She was probably glad to be able to leave behind all her connections with the Talbot family and the trouble they had brought her, and to start a new and more humble life as the wife of Thomas Fettiplace. She bore Fettiplace several children and lived until Christmas Day 1447.<sup>(2)</sup>

But if Lady Beatrice was more than willing to come to terms with the new Lord Talbot, John Abrahall, her Receiver General, was not. Abrahall was dismissed before, or at, Michaelmas 1422,<sup>(3)</sup> but in the following year he took up arms against Talbot. Such disturbance was caused by both in the neighbourhood of Goodrich that the inhabitants appealed to Parliament.<sup>(4)</sup> The origins of the dispute are obscure.

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- (1) BP 75/1420-21; Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica, i, p88. A boat was hired to carry Beatrice and Fettiplace from London to Westminster. Their first child was born at East Shefford in 1423.
- (2) CCR, 1447-54, pp11-12.
- (3) BP 75/1420-21, 76/1422-23. John Abrahall of Gylough and Eton Tregoz, Herefordshire, was Receiver General in 1420-21 but he had been replaced by Richard Legett by Michaelmas 1422.
- (4) Rot Parl, iv, p254a. The names of those involved are recited. Talbot had a following of at least 49 men, including his brother William. His presence suggests that the retinue may have been that with which the brothers carried out their commission to suppress riots on the Welsh borders in October 1422 (CPR, 1422-29, p35). If so, it provides an interesting example of how a royal commission could be diverted to the pursuit of private quarrels.



It is possible that Lady Beatrice had allowed Abrahall a free rein in the management of her Herefordshire and Gloucestershire estates and that his dismissal involved the loss of much local influence (he was MP for Herefordshire in 1419). It is conceivable too that the quarrel existed before Talbot succeeded to his brother's estates, for it may be more than coincidence that in 1419 the custody of the Talbot estates was first granted to John Talbot's retainer and then to Abrahall's brother-in-law. Talbot, inevitably, triumphed and no more is heard of the quarrel. Abrahall survived to take office in the Crown estate administration,<sup>(1)</sup> and eventually served Talbot himself twenty years later.

For John Talbot things could not have turned out better. He had succeeded to the combined inheritances of the Talbots, Le Stranges and Furnivals without having to meet any rival claims. He must have been particularly pleased to have been able to add Blackmere to his Shropshire possessions. He had always shown more interest in Shropshire than in the neighbourhood of his wife's inheritance in Sheffield. He had already betrothed his eldest son to the heiress of one of the largest inheritances in the county and he drew his closest retainers and companions from the county gentry.<sup>(2)</sup> The possession of Blackmere, his birthplace

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(1) For notes on Abrahall's stormy career see Wedgwood, p1. When he died in 1443 he was Receiver of the lordship of Monmouth and left a fortune of £1,129/1/8<sup>3</sup>d. (PRO, E368/233/109).

(2) For these matters see Chs II and VI below.

and childhood home must have been close to his heart. It was perhaps to insure his possession of this that he secured a quit claim on 20 June 1424 from the survivors of feoffees who had held the lordship to the use of his mother.<sup>(1)</sup> Within thirty-five years, through the making of three shrewd marriages and the fortune of two premature deaths, the family had advanced from lesser marcher lords to the ranks of the richer nobility. John, 6th Lord Talbot, could be thankful for his good fortune.

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(1) PRO, C 179/139.



## II

THE FAMILY AND THE INHERITANCE, 1422-1460

The emergence of the Talbot family in the senior ranks of the nobility was due largely to the time-honoured fortune of shrewd marriages and premature deaths. No other such windfalls were to come its way. Although both John Talbot and his heir were able to increase, largely by purchase, the number of their estates, and despite Talbot's own attempt to break it up, the foundation of the Earldom of Shrewsbury remained essentially that which was brought together between 1387 and 1422 for almost two centuries. The history of the years 1422-1460 was determined by one event - John Talbot's second marriage, in or before 1425, to Margaret Beauchamp. Not only did it bring claims, which they attempted to make good, to the lordship of Berkeley, but it also led to the attempt, equally futile, to partition the inheritance between the children of Talbot's two marriages. But before describing these territorial disputes, John Talbot's family by his first wife must be considered.

John, as described in Chapter I, married Maud Nevill, heiress of Furnival, as a result of his mother's marriage treaty with Lord Furnival in 1401. There were at least five children of the marriage: John (born before 1413), Thomas (born and died in Ireland in 1416), Christopher,

Joan, and another daughter who died in childhood.<sup>(1)</sup> Talbot had ambitious schemes for his eldest son, whilst still only a baby, for he was betrothed to Katherine, granddaughter and co-heiress of Hugh, Lord Burnell, in or before 1416. In that year Burnell enfeoffed no less than twenty-nine Shropshire manors and the manor of Wolverhampton to feoffees who were responsible for conveying the estates back to himself with the remainder to Talbot, Talbot's son, John, and his own granddaughter, Katherine, and the heirs of their bodies.<sup>(2)</sup> And after Hugh's death on 27 November 1420, in accordance with the deed of 1416, the Escheator of Shropshire was ordered to take the fealty of John, John and Katherine.<sup>(3)</sup> Yet, despite this, neither Talbot, father or son, ever gained possession of the manors involved. At some unknown date the contract was broken, for by 1430 Katherine had married Sir John Radcliffe.<sup>(4)</sup> What led to the loss of Katherine's inheritance is not known, although one would like

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- (1) Thomas was born at Finglas on 19 June and died there on 10 August (Chronicle of Ireland, p26). Joan eventually married James, Lord Berkeley (see below p49). Costs for the funeral for a daughter were met by the Steward of Blackmere in 1423-24 (BP 85/1423-24).
- (2) Cat Anc Deeds, ii, C2398, p215. John and Katherine were cousins. Hugh Burnell married Eleanor Le Strange of Knockin, Ankaret Talbot's first cousin. Katherine was about twelve in 1416 (CP, ii, p435).
- (3) CCR, 1419-22, p154; CPR, 1416-22, p371.
- (4) CP, xi, pp704-5. Perhaps Radcliffe's gift of a pipe of wine to the Blackmere household in 1423-24 was connected (BP 85/1423-24).



to think that Katherine herself showed a rare spirit of independence and married the man of her choice. One manor from the Burnell inheritance (Tasley) did, in fact, pass into the hands of the Talbots and this could possibly have been the price of her freedom.

This affair, little that we know of it, is one of the few recorded incidents of the first forty years of Sir John Talbot's life. He was knighted in 1426 and for his support received the manor of Worksop from his father in 1435-36. He was possibly given other estates from his father's lands, for by 1442 he employed his own Receiver.<sup>(1)</sup> His whereabouts can be traced but rarely in all these years. Only in March 1443 is it known that he was at Fulbourne in Cambridgeshire on his father's business.<sup>(2)</sup> Before 1445 he had married Elizabeth, daughter of James Butler, Earl of Ormond.<sup>(3)</sup> After his marriage he perhaps took a closer interest in the lands he was due to inherit from his mother, for by 1446 he was maintaining an establishment known as his guest-house within Sheffield castle. He is known to have been in residence there twice; on 6 September 1446 when he drew up his will before crossing to Ireland as Chancellor in his father's company and on 30 November 1451 when he

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(1) Sheffield Receiver's account, 1442-43, printed in THAS, ii, pp229-46.

(2) Ibid, p243.

(3) CP, xi, p705.

sealed letters making his kinsman, Thomas Talbot, Prior of Kilmainham, his deputy in that office.<sup>(1)</sup> Until his succession to his father's Earldom in 1453 little more is known of Talbot's eldest son.

More, in fact, is recorded about his second son, Christopher, knighted before 1433. Unlike his elder brother, Sir Christopher is known to have served in France between June 1435 and July 1436. He may possibly have been captured, but if so was immediately ransomed, for he is to be traced at Blackmere in 1436.<sup>(2)</sup> He seems to have been both more impressive as a man and more active in his father's affairs than John. He clearly enjoyed a considerable reputation in the lists, for in November 1440 it was reported in a letter of Robert Repps to John Paston, full of news of the recapture of Harfleur and the release of the Duke of Orleans, that a Spanish Knight had arrived who would "renne a cours wyth a sharpe spere for his sovereyn lady sake; qwom other Sir Richard Wodvyle or Sir Christofere Talbot shall delyver, to the wyrchip of Englonde and hemselff, be Goddes grace."<sup>(3)</sup> In addition to demonstrating his sporting prowess, 'Master Christopher' was also fairly busy, as the Blackmere accounts reveal, in his father's affairs in the 1430s. This is

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(1) THAS, ii, p352; Testamenta Eboracensia, (Surtees Society, xxx), p253; CPR, 1446-52, p560.

(2) CPR, 1429-36, p475; EM, Ad Ch 439; BP 76/1435-36. An unnamed son of Talbot's was captured, whom he had to ransom in 1436.

(3) Paston Letters, ii, p47.



all the more significant since there are no references to his elder brother being similarly occupied.<sup>(1)</sup> His promising career was brought to an early end, however, at Cause (Shropshire) on 10 August 1443, when he was run through by a lance wielded by his 'servant', Griffith Vaughan.<sup>(2)</sup> On his death the manors of Bubnell and Glossop, which he had been granted by his father, were divided in the absence of heirs between his brother and step-brother John, Lord Lisle.<sup>(3)</sup>

Lord Lisle was Talbot's eldest son by Margaret Beauchamp. Maud, Lady Talbot, died on 31 May 1422<sup>(4)</sup> and Talbot married the eldest daughter of Richard, Earl of Warwick in the chapel of Warwick castle before

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- (1) BP 76/1433-37; Wedgwood, p837. In 1437 he was also associated with his father as a feoffee of Bolas (see below p63).
- (2) Ibid. Mr. J. Lawson, of Shrewsbury School, has suggested that Vaughan was involved in a border raid on the Stafford lordship of Cause and that Talbot was killed attempting to protect the property. It is sometimes stated (wrongly) that Sir Christopher was killed at the battle of Northampton in 1460 - eg, Sir James Tait's article on the second Earl in the DNB and more recently R. I. Jack, 'A Quincentenary: the Battle of Northampton', Nottinghamshire Past and Present, iii, 1 (1960), p24.
- (3) Sheffield Receiver's account, 1446-47, THAS, ii, pp340-60.
- (4) Rot Pat Claus Hib, p225.

14 April 1425, and possibly on 6 September 1424.<sup>(1)</sup> It was undoubtedly a fine match, for not only was Margaret a daughter of one of the noblest families of England, but also at the time of the marriage she was both close in line of succession to the Earldom of Warwick and joint-heiress to her mother's barony of Lisle and her claim to Berkeley. The likelihood of succession to part of her father's inheritance decreased when his second wife, Isabel Despenser, gave birth to a son, Henry, later Duke of Warwick, in March 1425. It was revived, however, in 1449 when Henry died leaving an only sister, Anne, as sole heiress. There is some evidence that Margaret, her sisters, Eleanor, Duchess of Somerset, and Elizabeth, Lady Latimer, and their husbands, contested the succession of Anne's husband, Richard Nevill, to the title.<sup>(2)</sup> They certainly succeeded in securing recognition as heirs to Richard and Anne in the event of their dying childless.<sup>(3)</sup> Furthermore, Talbot had obviously long had half an eye on the Earldom, for he referred in his will in 1452 to

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- (1) The Complete Peerage has 6 September 1425 as the date of the marriage. But 'Margaret, Lady Talbot' was appointed a supervisor of Sir William Talbot's will on 14 April preceding (Register Henry Chichele, ed E. F. Jacob, ii, p326). The deed from which the compilers of the Complete Peerage took this date, then in the possession of St. Clair Baddeley, Castle Hale, Painswick, is unfortunately no longer traceable. The wedding might have taken place on 6 September 1424.
- (2) For a discussion of this, see R. L. Storey, The End of the House of Lancaster, Appendix vi, p231 ff.
- (3) CPR, 1446-52, p324.



his 'right' in the 'honour of Warwick'.<sup>(1)</sup> But it is to be doubted that he pursued this right with any great vigour.

The Talbot energies were concentrated, in fact, on the claims inherited from Lady Margaret's mother. After her father's death in 1439 she duly entered her share of the Lisle inheritance, being granted as the eldest sister the head of the barony at Kingston Lisle, Berkshire,<sup>(2)</sup> and her (much smaller) share of the few Berkeley lands which had descended, unchallenged, to her mother. These estates formed the basis of the lands provided for her children; three boys, John, Humphrey and Lewis, and three girls, Elizabeth, Eleanor and Waren. The eldest, John (born c1426), was created Lord Lisle in 1444.<sup>(3)</sup> But neither she nor her husband were satisfied with a share of the Lisle inheritances, for after 1439 they not only took up her mother's claim to the ancient barony of Berkeley, but also attempted, at the expense of John's first family, to convey a large part of his own inheritance to their children. His efforts to realise these two aims and the passionate opposition they aroused dominated Talbot's domestic affairs in the last fourteen years of his life.

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(1) Register Stafford and Kemp, f 312b.

(2) CFR, 1437-45, pp97-8.

(3) CP, viii, pp55-8. Lisle was promoted to the rank of Viscount on 30 October 1451.

The Berkeley lawsuit, in which the Talbot participation was but a phase, has been described elsewhere.<sup>(1)</sup> This account will, inevitably, draw heavily on J. Smyth's Lives of the Berkeleys, but it is hoped that, in examining the dispute from the Talbot angle, particularly between 1439-53, fresh light will be thrown on their part. The origin of the dispute was the settlement of the lordship of Berkeley and its members, separate from the other estates forming the Berkeley inheritance, in fee tail male in 1349. This was tested in 1417 when, on the death of Thomas, Lord Berkeley, his only daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Richard, Earl of Warwick, took possession of Berkeley castle and laid claim to the whole of the Berkeley inheritance in defiance of Lord Thomas' nearest male heir, his nephew James. However, the inquisition post mortem, which finally completed its inquiries in November, found that James was heir male and that he should by right of the entail of 1349 inherit the castle of Berkeley and the dozen manors in the Vale of Berkeley which constituted the ancient barony. All other lands held by Lord Thomas, both of the Lisle inheritance and of the Berkeley inheritance as held in fee simple or heir general, were found to descend to Elizabeth. The Earl and Countess of Warwick consequently sued livery and paid relief for these lands. The Berkeley part of these was some half dozen manors and other

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(1) J. Smyth's Lives of the Berkeleys, (referred to henceforth as Smyth) is still the fullest account, being firmly based on documents preserved in Berkeley castle. A summary of the lawsuit can also be found in Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, iii.



properties in Gloucestershire, Somerset, Bristol and Bridgwater, which included the manors of South Cerney, Bedminster and Portishead, but excluded Portbury. These, with the Lisle estates, eventually passed without dispute to Elizabeth's daughters.<sup>(1)</sup>

But the nucleus of the Berkeley inheritance with its "opulent revenue"<sup>(2)</sup> was denied to Warwick and it was over this that he fought Lord James. The details of the quarrel between them need not concern us. A settlement was eventually negotiated between the two in October 1426. Warwick made significant concessions and agreed on a division of the lordship, whereby he kept the manors of Wotton-under-Edge, Simondshall and Cowley, with rents in other properties in Gloucestershire and Somerset, for the term of his life only. James' right as heir male to Berkeley castle and the remainder, and to the whole after Warwick's death, was recognised.<sup>(3)</sup>

Lord and Lady Talbot and her sisters must have concurred with the compromise of 1426. But no sooner was Warwick dead than they took action to reverse it. In one vital respect, however, they were forestalled by

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(1) Smyth, pp34-5, 42. These Berkeley lands were included as part of the Lisle lands in a later Beauchamp valor (PRO, SC 12/18/46).

(2) Ibid, p35.

(3) Ibid, p47.



Map II: South Gloucestershire landholders in the fifteenth century



- Goodrich — Talbot estates
- Berkeley — Berkeley estates
- Bisley — other local landholders

▨ — land over 400'.



James, Lord Berkeley, for he immediately re-entered the lands he had conceded to Warwick. But he was made to pay for his temerity. The influence wielded by Warwick's sons-in-law, Edmund, Earl of Dorset, Talbot and George, Lord Latimer, bore heavily on him. On 2 July 1439 he was committed to the Tower and only released on recognizance of £1,000, an undertaking to appear in Chancery for the following three Michaelmas and a promise to abide by the order of that court. He was also removed from all commissions, including Commissions of the Peace.<sup>(1)</sup> Having thus dealt with Berkeley, the heiresses' attention turned to the inquisition post mortem on their father's lands, held at Gloucester on 6 September. The jury, packed or intimidated, found that the succession of not only Wotton-under-Edge, Simondshall and Cowley, but also Hinton, Cam and Slimbridge, belonged to Margaret, Eleanor and Elizabeth.<sup>(2)</sup>

This favourable finding, however, did not give the heiresses actual possession, which became less likely as the years went by. The Crown, which, perhaps under the influence of Cardinal Beaufort, had turned a blind eye in 1439 (Beaufort was Dorset's uncle), began to take a firmer

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(1) Ibid, p57. The heiresses were also allowed to enter their lands parcel by parcel as inquisitions were returned and on 26 July were given livery of all before inquisitions were completed because "certain persons purposed and greatly laboured to hinder the taking of inquisitions" (CPR, 1436-41, p293; CFR, 1437-45, p97)<sup>1</sup>

(2) Ibid, p57.

and more neutral attitude. At the same time Dorset and Latimer appear gradually to have lost interest, leaving the Talbots alone to pursue the claim. This was apparent by August 1440. The heiresses had succeeded in entering a few tenements in Wotton-under-Edge and Cowley, and Berkeley, disregarding the inquisition of 1439, brought a charge of novel disseisin against them, to which the heiresses countered with charges concerning Hinton, Cam and Slimbridge. Arbitration was entrusted to a panel consisting of three Peers - Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, Berkeley's lord since 1421, Richard, Duke of York, from whom Talbot received annuities worth at least £100, and the neutral Humphrey, Earl of Stafford - and two judges, Sir John Hody and Sir Richard Newton. But a decision was postponed because both Dorset and Talbot were at the time fully engaged in the siege of Harfleur. Moreover, Talbot, and he alone, threatened that if judgment were reached in his absence, he would raise the siege and return to England.<sup>(1)</sup> The narrowing down of the dispute to Berkeley and Talbot was again demonstrated by an incident which probably occurred later in the same year. John Talbot, later Lord Lisle, sent a servant to serve a subpoena on Berkeley at Wotton-under-Edge to appear in Chancery. Berkeley's answer was, in the customary manner, to beat the bearer and force him to eat the order, parchment, wax and all.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) CCR, 1435-41, p325. Berkeley and Gloucester had sealed indentures on 1 November 1421, in which Gloucester had agreed to support his quarrels. It was probably his influence which had paved the way for the agreement of 1426 (Smyth, p45). For Talbot and York see below p228.

(2) Smyth, p59.



Early in 1441, Dorset and Latimer, in Talbot's absence, showed their willingness to come to terms. On 18 February they and Berkeley bound themselves over for 5,000 marks each and agreed to accept an award to be made by Hody, Newton and John Fray, chief baron of the Exchequer, before midsummer. This was, in fact, postponed to November,<sup>(1)</sup> but by this time Talbot had probably revealed his opposition to any settlement his brothers-in-law might make, for he obtained a protection from all suits for a year from 24 October. At the same time, another Gloucestershire inquisition was moved to find that the heiress' rights in Berkeley were even more extensive than those found in 1439.<sup>(2)</sup> And in January 1442 a petition was presented on his behalf in Parliament to have a protection for all his lands, particularly against assize of novel disseisin. This was granted, but the Crown warily insisted that, if any action were taken against the Berkeleys, it would be disallowed.<sup>(3)</sup> It was possibly to allay suspicions that in the following month, having recently returned from France, he agreed to join Dorset and Latimer in referring the dispute to arbitration again.<sup>(4)</sup> But this, like the earlier effort came to nought. The real intentions of the Talbots were revealed

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(1) CCR, 1435-41, p464.

(2) Smyth, pp58,60. This, it was claimed, came as a result of a thorough investigation of Berkeley deeds by the late Earl of Warwick and his council.

(3) Rot Parl, iv, pp40-1.

(4) CCR, 1441-47, p60. The award was to be made by Palm Sunday (25 March).

later in the year when Margaret, now Countess of Shrewsbury, lost patience with the process of law and took forcible possession of Wotton-under-Edge, Cowley and Simondshall.<sup>(1)</sup>

Having thus eventually gained possession of the manors occupied by Warwick, the Talbots were prepared to come to terms with Berkeley. But this took time. Not until 12 September 1445 did all parties appear in Chancery and agree that a settlement should be made. Talbot and Berkeley both entered into recognizances of £2,000 each,<sup>(2)</sup> and an award was finally made at Cirencester on 5 April 1448 by Lords Beauchamp and Ferrers, and Judges Fortescue and Yelverton. Once again a compromise was proposed. Referring to the settlement of 1426, the arbitrators awarded Wotton-under-Edge, Simondshall and Cowley to Margaret, Countess of Shrewsbury, for term of life only, and the rest to Berkeley. In sanctioning the forcible possession of 1442 this represented a qualified victory to the Talbots, but the award had carefully avoided any reference to an hereditary title.<sup>(3)</sup> The test was whether Berkeley was prepared to accept yet again the position he had endured in 1426-39.

Berkeley in fact almost immediately revealed his dissatisfaction by

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(1) Smyth, p59. He states this took place three years after James Berkeley had taken peaceable possession.

(2) Ibid

(3) Ibid, p61.



refusing in 1449 to join in a petition to Parliament to ratify the award. Indeed, according to Smyth, he was never prepared to accept it.<sup>(1)</sup> In the summer of 1450, therefore, taking advantage of the disorder caused by Cade's rebellion and Lord Lisle's presence in the King's army at Blackheath, he turned his anger on Wotton-under-Edge and thoroughly sacked the manor house. The damage done was extensive. All the main timbers were cut and all the iron and lead stripped.<sup>(2)</sup> But this act of destruction only succeeded in creating a feud out of a dispute, for the Talbots determined to revenge themselves. For a year it seems, southern Gloucestershire was disrupted by their private war. The Berkeleys took to their castle whilst Lisle mobilised local support against them.<sup>(3)</sup> In the early summer of 1451 Shrewsbury himself, recently returned from France, arrived on the scene. On 16 June Isabel, Lady Berkeley, wrote from London to her husband:

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(1) Ibid, p62.

(2) C. L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature, p366; Six Town Chronicles, p130; Chancery Proceedings, Elizabeth I, i, plxxviii. Lady Margaret claimed in 1464 that the lead in the drains, conduits and sewers was ripped out, goods worth 4,000 marks were taken and that initial repairs cost 1,600 marks.

(3) Ibid. Smyth refers to the "inrodes and spoiles that their followers made each upon others lands and tenants" (p73). For the Talbot supporters see below pp235-8.

"The Earle of Shroesbury lieth right nye unto you, and shapeth all the wyles that hee can to distrusse you and yours, for hee will not meddle with you openly noe manner of wise, but it bee with great falsdome that hee can bring about to beguile you, or els that hee caused yee have so fewe peopull about you, then will hee set on you, for hee saith hee will never come to the king againe till hee have done you an ill turne".(1)

Possibly Talbot kept his word, for he is not known to have returned to the court until after Lisle had managed to enter Berkeley castle. Of two versions later put foward by the parties, Lady Margaret's description of how this was achieved is probably basically correct.<sup>(2)</sup> That is that, on the night of 6 September 1451, Berkeley sent a band of men to raid the house of one Richard Andrews, a blind tenant of the Talbots. But Viscount Lisle was forewarned, came to the rescue and overcame Berkeley's men. Amongst them was one Ryse Tewe, who under threat of death was marched back to Berkeley and forced to persuade the unsuspecting guard to open the gate. James Berkeley and his sons were surprised in their beds. With their enemies in their hands, the Talbots proceeded to exact their revenge.

What part Talbot himself played in this or subsequent actions is hard

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(1) Smyth, p63.

(2) In 1466 James' son William petitioned the Crown against Margaret, citing his version of the events of 1451-52. Margaret replied with her version. Berkeley could only accuse the Talbots of hiring Tewe to betray his father "by their subtle and dampnable ymagenacions" (Chancery Proceedings, Elizabeth I, i, plxxvi ff).



to assess. He seems to have stayed in the background whilst the lead in prosecuting the Berkeleys was taken by his Countess. Certainly at the end of September he was summoned to the King in the Midlands, who was then preparing to take action against the war between Devon and Bonville in Devon and Somerset.<sup>(1)</sup> Whilst this was being settled Lady Margaret kept the Berkeleys imprisoned in their own castle.<sup>(2)</sup> Then on 4 October she brought them before the court of oyer and terminer at Chipping Campden. Here the Berkeleys were condemned for the sack of Wotton-under-Edge and ordered to make compensation for the lands in Slimbridge, Warthe and Newlease, and pay £1,000 in cash, with the grant of the castle of Berkeley to the Talbots for two years as surety. James, Lord Berkeley, was further bound to pay 700 marks damages to Lisle, and his son William was bound over as Lisle's retainer. Finally, the court confirmed the Talbot right to Wotton-under-Edge, and ordered Berkeley to raise a recognizance of £10,000.<sup>(3)</sup>

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- (1) R. L. Storey, The End of the House of Lancaster, p91. Between 22-30 September Devon campaigned through Somerset against Bonville and the Earl of Wiltshire. It was Richard of York, not the King, who pacified the quarrel. His presence in the West Country led one chronicler to state that he had imprisoned Berkeley (Six Town Chronicles, p138).
- (2) Chancery Proceedings, op cit. Berkeley charged Margaret of keeping them under great duress. Margaret would only admit to their being in house arrest.
- (3) The proceedings of this and following courts were outlined by Smyth (pp69-71) and were also enrolled on the Coram Rege roll, Hilary 30 Henry VI (PRO, KB 27/763/41-2). This fills out Smyth's account. The retaining of William Berkeley seems to have been intended as an additional surety. William agreed to serve Lisle before all men except the King and his cousin John, Duke of Norfolk.

The next step was to take the Berkeleys down to Bristol where they were formally bound to keep the peace and to find £12,204 in compensation and surety.<sup>(1)</sup>

But the Countess of Shrewsbury was not satisfied with this revenge, thorough as it was, and having her enemies still in her hands could not resist the temptation of making yet another bid for the whole lordship. Consequently, in the next year she presented her case, before no less than three courts, that her temporary occupation of Berkeley should be converted into permanent possession. The juries of these courts, Smyth had no doubts, were laboured. And yet she did not succeed in disinheritng her enemies. At the first court held at Cirencester in December the judge, Bingham, was persuaded to rule against the entail of 1350, but he never certified his decision. "Whereof", wrote Smyth, "may be gathered that he held the shuffling fowl, howsoever the dealing might seem faire before him". At the second court held at Gloucester early in 1452 she was challenged by Isabel, Lady Berkeley. But Lady Margaret was too strong, for she had the unfortunate Isabel thrown into Gloucester gaol where she died shortly before Michaelmas. At the final court, once more at Cirencester, in October, Margaret had to satisfy herself with confis-

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(1) Smyth, p71. This took place on 4 November at Greyfriars.



cation of all the Berkeley lands.<sup>(1)</sup>

The death of Shrewsbury, Lisle and Sir James Berkeley at Castillon in the following summer put a sudden end to Lady Margaret's efforts to disinherit her enemies. She still occupied Berkeley and remorselessly exploited it,<sup>(2)</sup> but apparently, on the completion of the term of two years, she left, although still asserting her claim. Both parties were exhausted. Much damage had been done not only in Berkeley and Wotton-under-Edge, but also in the Talbot lordship of Painswick.<sup>(3)</sup> And a new factor appeared in the person of John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury. He was no friend to his step-mother, whose attempts to disinherit him he had managed to overcome.<sup>(4)</sup> His weight was now thrown on to the side of Lord Berkeley. In 1457, when he was Treasurer of England, he sealed a complicated, and interesting, indenture with Berkeley. Under its terms the marriage took place (25 July) between Berkeley and John's elderly sister Joan. In addition the Earl agreed to secure the return of a recognizance worth £1,000, pay a maritagium of 100 marks and provide

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(1) Ibid, pp71-2. Despite Margaret's powers, Berkeley had managed to purchase a pardon on 20 November 1451 for all his and his sons' crimes committed between Easter 1450 and Michaelmas 1451, the period in which he had been attacking the Talbots (CPR, 1446-52, p511). On 3 June 1452 the Earl and Countess themselves felt it prudent to buy a pardon for all entries, gifts, alienations, debts in her inheritance after the deaths of any of his ancestors without due suit to the King (ibid, p552).

(2) Smyth, p72. According to Smyth, all that belonged to her she utterly wasted.

(3) Ibid, p73. The fee farm of Berkeley town was reduced from £22 to £11, "where it sticketh to this day".

(4) See below pp59-60.

Joan's marriage apparel. In return Berkeley promised to make an estate of £120 per annum to his fourth wife. But Shrewsbury also became Berkeley's lord, promising to support him in all his quarrels. This was in effect a cross between a marriage alliance and an indenture of retainer.<sup>(1)</sup> And although in Shrewsbury's lifetime the Lady Margaret had refused to come to terms, three years after his death, in 1463, and a few weeks before James Berkeley himself died, the two came to an agreement to drop all their actions against each other.<sup>(2)</sup>

It was left to the next generation to play out the final act. Lady Margaret died in 1467 and her claims were taken up by her young grandson Thomas, Viscount Lisle. He refused to surrender Wotton-under-Edge to William, Lord Berkeley, and even schemed to emulate his father's feat of surprising Berkeley in his castle. Eventually, in March 1470, he recklessly challenged Berkeley to settle their quarrel by combat. The result was the fight at Nibley Green and his death. He left no male heirs and Berkeley re-entered Wotton-under-Edge.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Smyth, pp81-2.

(2) Ibid, p95.

(3) Ibid, pp107-13. Thomas' sister Elizabeth was his eventual heiress. She married Edward Grey, who was granted the title of Lord Lisle and made a formal peace with Berkeley in 1482.



One point stands out about the whole of the Talbot campaign against the Berkeleys; however much the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury overrode or succeeded in bending the law to their purposes, they never in fact made it their slave. At every stage they went to great pains, and no doubt great cost, to secure legal sanction, however disorderly and unjust their actions and aims might have been. Yet they were never able to take the law completely into their own hands. The fact that, in the face of all their might, successive courts refused to recognise the Countess Margaret's claim to Berkeley castle testifies to this. Hence, although they were able, without fear of retribution, to disrupt completely the peace of the Vale of Berkeley, this still did not secure their objective - the displacement of the Berkeleys. To this extent justice was not totally undone.

The realisation that he might not succeed against Berkeley may perhaps have been one of the factors that encouraged Talbot to rearrange his own inheritance in favour of his second family. The need to provide for the children of a second marriage was an ever present threat to the unity of an inheritance, but in Talbot's case this would have appeared to have been slight, since Margaret Beauchamp's children were endowed with a share of the Lisle estates. There was no obvious need to carve a new inheritance out of the old. Nevertheless, this was what Talbot

attempted to do. It may have been that he developed a marked preference for John, Lord Lisle, his eldest son by Margaret Beauchamp. But whether this or the influence of Margaret herself, or even her father, was the reason, Talbot decided to partition his estates between the two branches of his family.

The principal estates set aside for the cadet branch of the family were the lordships of Blackmere and Painswick. Talbot originally arranged for the conveyance of Blackmere to the joint-enfeoffment of himself and Lady Margaret and the heirs of their bodies on 20 April 1434 through an enfeoffment to his father-in-law, the Earl of Warwick, his brother Richard and others.<sup>(1)</sup> On 11 May 1442 he confirmed and strengthened this by making a gift of the lordship to Richard Talbot, so that he in his turn could make an outright grant, in the court of King's Bench, to John and Margaret and their heirs. Painswick was made over to their children in a similar fashion at the same court, and a year later, to make assurance double sure, the settlement of the two estates was protected by their enfeoffment to use.<sup>(2)</sup> At the same time, it would appear, as the establishment of these uses, by deeds sealed at Cheswardine on 3 June 1443, Talbot granted the manors of Cheswardine,

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(1) PRO, C 139/154, 179. The date of this and the involvement of Warwick may indicate a connection with Talbot's release from captivity. See below p150.

(2) Ibid; CCR, 1441-47, p151.



Wrockwardine, Sutton Maddock, Tasley, Credenhill, Penyard and Strangeord to Lisle, for the term of life.<sup>(1)</sup> But this was not the limit to his settlement in favour of his second family. By September 1452, when he made up his last will, he had altered the tenure of the above manors from term of life to fee tail and had, moreover, granted the lordship of Corfham to Sir Lewis, his second son by Margaret.<sup>(2)</sup> After this series of sweeping rearrangements to his inheritance he expected his heir, Sir John, to accept the Furnival estates (which, as Sir John's mother's inheritance, could hardly be alienated), the ancient Talbot seat of Goodrich and a handful of southern manors. Only one Shropshire property<sup>(3)</sup> was left to Sir John, although he was to inherit the title of Earl of Shrewsbury. Financially this would have meant a loss of as much as £500, almost half the value of the inheritance.

Talbot was clearly under no illusions about his heir's willingness to accept this partition of the inheritance. In his will he added the following clause:

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(1) Ibid, p156.

(2) Register Stafford and Kemp, ff 311-12.

(3) Shifnal, which had come into the hands of Furnival's heirs in 1420.

"I pray and require my son and heire and on my blessing as highly as I can as the fader may charge the son in eschuying of my curse and as he wolle have my blessing I charge him that he intercept not ne lette this my wille to be performed and nether he ne non other in his name, ne non other of my blood. And yf they or any of them do or let this wille that then my feffees make estate of suche londes as they been enfeffed in to my executors and thei to sylle the seide londes and to dispose hem for my soul".(1)

But these threats and sanctions were of no avail and Sir John, predictably, challenged every settlement made by his father.

Further details of the dispute and the methods adopted by John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury to counter his father's measures, and his step-mother's efforts to implement them, are to be found in the inquisitions post mortem of the lands of both the father and the son. In the Shropshire and Gloucestershire inquisitions of 1453 and 1460<sup>(2)</sup> the claims of both John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury and the dowager Countess Margaret to both lordships of Blackmere and Painswick were recited. None of the four documents is impartial. In effect, the findings of the juries repeat the case for the parties dominant at the time of sitting. Hence, in 1453, the Countess Margaret, at the height of her power against the Berkeleys in Gloucestershire, secured a favourable finding on Painswick, whereas in Shropshire, Shrewsbury was fortunate to have his

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(1) Register Stafford and Kemp, ff 311-12. The transcript published by G. H. Vane in TSAS, Series 3, iv (1904), pp371-9, is not absolutely accurate, suggesting, for instance, 'aiming' for 'eschuying' and missing 'ne non other in his name' in the above passage.

(2) PRO, C 139/154, 179.



close associate and feoffee, Thomas Horde, as Escheator. In 1460 the tables were turned. Shrewsbury's man, Sir William Mill, was Escheator in Gloucestershire and the jury reversed the 1453 finding on Painswick, whilst in Shropshire Roger Kynaston, a prominent Yorkist, was Escheator and the jury upheld the claim of Countess Margaret.<sup>(1)</sup> In each of the four documents, therefore, the case for either side in each estate is presented once.

All inquisitions agreed that, by a fine levied in the court of King's Bench in the Trinity term of 1442 before Richard Newton, CJ, both Blackmere and Painswick had been settled on Talbot, Margaret his wife and the heirs of their body. This was confirmed, as we have seen, in Talbot's will, and covered the following year by enfeoffments to use.

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(1) For Horde, see Wedgwood, p469. He was Shrewsbury's feoffee in Shifnal (PRO, C140/46) and MP for Shropshire in the Coventry Parliament of 1459. Mill was Shrewsbury's Receiver at Painswick (PRO, C 139/179). It was Kynaston who killed Lord Audley at Blore Heath in 1459. He threw himself on the King's mercy at Ludford, but was back on Yorkist commissions after the battle of Northampton, being made a JP in Shropshire for the first time on 1 September 1460. On 1 November he was appointed Escheator. He was later knighted by Edward IV. There can be no doubt of his Yorkist sympathies in 1460. Yet at Michaelmas 1459 the Bailiff of Blackmere was charged with £4, received "de Rogero Kynaston de annuitate dicti comitis per man' Johannis Larton per assign' domini", which although the meaning is ambiguous, suggests that Kynaston had also been an annuitant of the Earl of Shrewsbury. He must have been a slippery customer (H. Owen and J. B. Blakeway, History of Shrewsbury, i, pp227, 229; CPR, 1452-61, pp608, 676; BP 82/1458-59).

John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, did not challenge the existence of this fine; he challenged its legality. And to do this he claimed the force of a previous enfeoffment of both Blackmere and Painswick by Gilbert, Lord Talbot, to the use of one Ralph Stanley, clerk. Stanley, Shrewsbury claimed, was expelled from both lordships by his father when he took possession in 1422, but Stanley, who had still held the legal right, had himself enfeoffed the lordships to use so that they could be reconveyed to Shrewsbury.

Shrewsbury's case, therefore, hinged on the validity of the enfeoffments claimed in the name of Ralph Stanley. The Painswick return of 1453 (favourable to the Countess Margaret), in fact, mentions such an enfeoffment but asserts that Stanley released his claim to John Talbot. Mention of Stanley is avoided altogether in the Shropshire inquisition of 1460. Both Stanley and the enfeoffment claimed in his name are shrouded in obscurity. Stanley was, according to a court roll of April 1422, 'parson' of Whitchurch.<sup>(1)</sup> And yet, according to the parish register, Roger Thirsk, who held high office in the households of both Gilbert Talbot and his mother, was Rector from 1409-23. Was Stanley his vicar or curate?<sup>(2)</sup> The enfeoffment is even more puzzling than Stanley's identity,

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(1) BP 19/1421-22.

(2) He may possibly have been related to Sir William Stanley of the Wirral, Cheshire, who was one of Gilbert's confirmed feoffees in Painswick. See below p 57, n(1).



for it is certain that Gilbert Talbot enfeoffed Blackmere to the use of Thirsk and others (not including Stanley) early in his own tenancy, so as to convey the lordship to the joint-enfeoffment of himself and his wife, by right of which she occupied the lordship for four years after his death. And at the same time Painswick was enfeoffed to the use of Gilbert's brother Richard and others (Stanley not included).<sup>(1)</sup> One has, therefore, to reconcile the unsupported claim concerning Stanley with the well-documented settlement concerning Thirsk and Richard Talbot. Considerable doubt must surely rest on the validity of Sir John's case. The Shropshire jurors in 1460 (favourable to the Countess Margaret) completely avoided reference to any enfeoffments of Blackmere made by Lord Gilbert. They were careful, in fact, to trace the first Earl's claim to Blackmere back to his mother's time. They quoted an enfeoffment made by her, the existence of which is corroborated by a manorial account of 1400-01,<sup>(2)</sup> stated that Gilbert entered the lordship against the terms of this enfeoffment and recorded that Ankaret Talbot's feoffees made estate to Lord John on 20 June 1424, for which evidence was produced at the inquisition. They were thus able to side step both the contrary evidence of 1453 and Lady Beatrice Talbot's joint-enfeoffment. Both sides scrupulously avoided any references to this joint-enfeoffment, perhaps for fear lest Lady Beatrice's son by

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(1) CCR, 1419-22, pp17, 24-5.

(2) BP 75/1400-01.

Thomas Fettiplace put in a rival claim. The Earl had come to terms with Lady Beatrice in 1422<sup>(1)</sup> and the deeds of 1424, 1434 and 1442 were probably designed partly to secure his claim against her heirs. As far as the second Earl was concerned, he may well have raked in Ralph Stanley rather than revived Lord Gilbert's enfeoffments, so as to forestall claims from his aunt's heirs. Neither side would have welcomed a third claimant.

One can only conclude that the claim through Stanley was at its best weak and at its worst trumped up. It was most significant in giving the second Earl the pretext to set up his own enfeoffments with which to challenge his father. These were made within the last five years of his father's life, for named among his feoffees was his brother-in-law, James, Earl of Wiltshire, who was elevated to that title in 1448. The composition of these boards is impressive. In Blackmere, for instance, there were fourteen feoffees under Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, including not only Wiltshire, but also Ralph, Lord Cromwell, John, Lord Dudley, John, Lord Beauchamp and Sir Thomas Stanley, and, moreover, several of his father's own associates and retainers. Foremost amongst these were William Burley of Broncroft, who also stood on the smaller Painswick board, Thomas Everingham of Newhall and Robert Stafford of

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(1) See above p 29.



(?) Treeton.<sup>(1)</sup> Burley at least had been persuaded to change his mind in this matter, for he had been one of the witnesses to the deeds of 1443. With its impressive array of Peers, the presence of the respected lawyer Burley and others who would have been expected to support the old Earl, Shrewsbury's enfeoffment suggests that, despite his legal disadvantages, he enjoyed wide and active sympathy. Against the letter of the law he could rely on the landholder's deep respect for the concept of hereditary succession.

In the event, possession proved to be nine-tenths of the law. On his father's death, the second Earl was able to outmanoeuvre his step-mother completely. Although he had no doubt recruited sufficient support and sympathy amongst his neighbours, he was helped greatly by Lisle's death at his father's side and the change in the balance of power at court, which removed the Countess' brother-in-law, Somerset, from influence.<sup>(2)</sup> He took possession of Blackmere on 20 September 1453, the inquisition post mortem conducted by Thomas Horde confirmed his title on 18 October and on 10 November he secured an order for the Escheator to give him full seisin of all his father's lands in Shropshire, saving only reasonable dower for his step-mother.<sup>(3)</sup> In

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(1) For the association of John, first Earl, with these men see below p222, 229, 284.

(2) See below p69.

(3) PRO, C 139/154; CFR, 1452-61, p87. He granted Corfham to the Countess Margaret for her dower.

Gloucestershire also he was soon successful. The Countess' influence evaporated and early in 1454 he was able to enter Painswick. Families, such as the Mills of Harescombe, were quick to make their peace with him.<sup>(1)</sup> His victory was swift and complete.

The support and influence enjoyed by Shrewsbury in the last years of the Lancastrian monarchy left the Countess Margaret isolated and powerless. But the success of the Yorkists at Northampton in July 1460, and Shrewsbury's death on the field of battle, gave her the opportunity to strike back. Following the inquisition post mortem, held at Shrewsbury after Christmas, she re-entered Blackmere.<sup>(2)</sup> And, although the finding of the Gloucestershire inquisition was unfavourable, she successfully petitioned against the legality of the proceedings.<sup>(3)</sup> When Edward IV usurped the throne her success appeared to be assured. But, although he confirmed her possession of Painswick on 24 July 1461, the new King was markedly conciliatory towards the young Earl of

- (1) William Mill was made Receiver of Painswick on 1 February 1454 (PRO, C 139/179).
- (2) A statement of arrears owed by the Blackmere ministers to the Countess Margaret in 1462 has survived (BP 88, list of arrears, 2 Edward IV).
- (3) CFR, 1452-61, p295. In November she was given custody of the lordship until a decision had been made according to the statute on escheator's inquisitions of 1430. Since the Escheator, William Mill, was also an officer in the lordship, the statute which forbade the taking of an inquisition by the dead man's officers had clearly been infringed (see Rot Parl, iv, p357).



Shrewsbury.<sup>(1)</sup> It was no doubt through his pressure that a compromise was reached. In 1466, Margaret surrendered Blackmere to the Earl and he in his turn released all claims to Painswick, which passed into the permanent possession of the Lisle inheritance.<sup>(2)</sup> Both parties thereafter accepted this settlement.

Blackmere and Painswick were not the only estates intended by the first Earl for his second family. In 1453, John, second Earl, appears to have been able to enter the Shropshire and Herefordshire manors granted to Lisle ten years earlier, but on his death his step-mother recovered them. However, in these, as in Blackmere, Edward IV arbitrated in favour of the third Earl. In 1465 a special inquisition into their tenancy was held and the Earl was found to be the true heir. When a second inquisition found in June 1466 that the Countess Margaret was enjoying the profits, she was disseised.<sup>(3)</sup> There was no need for

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(1) Ibid, 1461-71, p28.

(2) John, 3rd Earl of Shrewsbury entered Blackmere at Michaelmas 1466. (BP 82/1466-67). The Earl and Margaret's grandson Thomas, Lord Lisle, came to terms in 1469 over Painswick. The lordship was granted in dower to Lisle's widow in 1471, and eventually passed into the hands of Edward Grey, Lord Lisle (S. Rudder, History of Gloucestershire, p558; CPR, 1467-77, p305; PRO, SC 1119/6).

(3) PRO, E 153/1587/1, 2. On 15 May 1461 Margaret, Countess of Shrewsbury had the advowson of Tasley as guardian of the lands of Lord de Lisle; John, third Earl, held it in 1469 (Registrum Johannis Stanbury, Canterbury and York Society, xxv, xxvi, pp177, 186).

Edward IV to arbitrate in the other disputed estates. John, second Earl, entered Corfham, despite his father's grant of the manor to Lisle's brother Lewis, but he assigned it to his step-mother as dower. The first Earl's feoffees in the southern manors were just as powerless. In spite of their orders to sell in such circumstances, they were expelled and replaced by the new Earl's feoffees in two parts, whilst the third was added to the dower.<sup>(1)</sup>

To the lasting fortune of the Earldom, the first Earl's attempt to partition the inheritance, which he himself had brought together, failed. Through the power and influence of his heir and later the, not altogether disinterested, arbitration of Edward IV, the threat of his curse passed unheeded. Painswick was the only permanent loss to the inheritance. The descendants of John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, were thus able to enjoy an inheritance only slightly diminished by his father's ambition to build up the wealth of his second family.

Although the family was preoccupied in the mid-fifteenth century with the Berkeley and partition disputes, throughout these years the first two Earls of Shrewsbury had, in fact, been steadily expanding their territorial power. A considerable number of estates were acquired

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(1) PRO, C 139/154, 179. Two executors at least, William Cumberford, and Thomas Everingham, did not care to make a stand against the new Earl either, for they soon became his feoffees in Alton, Staffordshire.



by both, through grants, purchases and gifts in Shropshire and the neighbourhood of Sheffield.

John, first Earl's attention concentrated on Shropshire. His first acquisition appears to have been the manor of Alberbury, two-thirds of which he granted to the use of his retainer, Hugh Burgh, in 1414.<sup>(1)</sup> To Alberbury were soon added the manors of Bitterley, Tasley (from the inheritance of Hugh, Lord Burnell), Baldesley and Basford.<sup>(2)</sup> His most important acquisitions were the manors of Shifnal and Bolas. He took possession of a moiety of Shifnal on 12 February 1420 in succession to Adam Peshale who had held the manor with reversion to the heiresses of Thomas, Lord Furnival, and their husbands. The other moiety was occupied by Joan, Furnival's daughter by Ankaret Talbot, and Sir Hugh Cokesey. They died without issue and their moiety eventually passed to Talbot.<sup>(3)</sup> In June 1437 he was granted, with others, the manor of Bolas by the surviving feoffees of his brother-in-law, Richard de la Mare. His fellow feoffees, who included his son Christopher and Receiver General, Richard Legett, later released their claims to him, for the manor passed

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(1) T. F. Duke, The Antiquities of Shropshire, p107. Alberbury is but a mile from Burgh's seat of Wattlesborough.

(2) PRO, C 139/154. For Tasley see above p34. Baldesley and Basford were in Talbot's hands by 1423 (BP 76/1423-24) but they passed out of the inheritance after 1460. Bitterley was secured sometime before 1453 and remained.

(3) CFR, 1413-22, p322. Joan died before 1441, and he died in 1445 (Wedgwood, p202). In 1522 Shifnal was worth more than Corfham and of the Shropshire estates was second only in value to Blackmere. For notes on Peshale see H. T. Weyman, 'Shropshire MPs', TSAS, 4th Series, xi, Pt 1. n1.

into the undisputed possession of the family.<sup>(1)</sup>

In his later years he extended his Shropshire wealth even further by the purchase of a number of smaller properties on the edges of Clee Forest. These, 'all my purchases in Shropshire', he left to Lewis and Humphrey, his younger sons by Margaret Beauchamp. By a deed of 8 August 1452 he settled Ashfield, Loughton, Middlehope, Neenton and Overton on Lewis and his heirs, with the remainder to Humphrey. Lewis died without issue before 1460 and so these lands passed to his brother, who already had as his share of the purchases, Aston, Bouldon, Linley, Sydnall and Wheathill. But in 1496 Humphrey himself died without issue and all ten properties returned to the senior branch of the family.<sup>(2)</sup>

- (1) CPR, 1436-41, p73; CCR, 1435-41, p89. Bolas included the subsidiary manor of Isombridge. It is clear from the articles by Eyton on Isombridge and Bolas Magna (Antiquities of Shropshire, viii, pp262-79) that the manor described in Letters Patent and Letters Close of 1437 as 'Boulwas' was Bolas and not 'Buildwas' as given by the editors of the Calendars. In later documents it is spelt Bowlas or Bolas (BP 87/1475-79; 88/13-14 Henry VIII). Richard de la Mare married Alice Talbot, widow of Sir Thomas Barre. She died in 1436 in the same year as her second husband. He held Bolas by the grant of John Prophete, one time Dean of Hereford Cathedral, and also occupied, at the time of his death, the Talbot manor of Credenhill. In the autumn of 1433 Richard and Alice were summoned by Lady Margaret to spend Christmas with her at Corfham. They were at that time in residence at Credenhill for Richard Clerk, Talbot's Auditor, made a special journey to the manor to deliver his Lady's summons (BP 76/1433-34; Wedgwood, p572; Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry VI, pp16, 166).
- (2) Register Stafford and Kemp, f 312; PRO, C 139/179; Calendar of Inquisitions, Henry VII, i, pp428-9. Talbot also intended Lewis to inherit Corfham, the centre of this patrimony.



John, first Earl, also secured two properties in Derbyshire; Bubnell from Sir Philip Leche, and Over Stratton from Hugh de Strelly, both in 1424.<sup>(1)</sup> But it was John, second Earl, who concentrated his territorial expansion in this area. He purchased the manors of Windfield and Crich from the executors of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, paying an instalment of £100 in July 1459.<sup>(2)</sup> He seems also to have been granted the manors of Moryash and Chelmorton by Queen Margaret in reward for his services. In addition to these he acquired the neighbouring manors of Carsington, Childerton and Foolow and, moving South, the Oxfordshire manors of North Leigh and Wolvercote.<sup>(3)</sup>

Between them the two Earls added over twenty-five properties to the inheritance, constituting, particularly in Shropshire, a substantial increase to the power and wealth of the family.<sup>(4)</sup> This achievement, not the disputes in which their ancestors were involved, no doubt has appeared the outstanding feature of the mid-fifteenth century to the later

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(1) CCR, 1422-29, p137; Cat Anc Deeds, iii, C 3362.

(2) HMC Report, De Lisle and Dudley Mss, pp210-12. Shrewsbury was himself an executor. On the death of his son in 1473 eight manors in the Peak were enfeoffed to trustees to pay off the remainder of the debt (PRO, C 140/46).

(3) PRO, C 139/179. Nothing is known of the manner of acquisition of these except that Moryash and Chelmorton were held of the Queen.

(4) In 1522 the estates acquired in the fifteenth century by John, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury, provided over one-third of the expected net income (about £550) from all the Shropshire estates (BP 88, valor).

Earls. Hence, despite the threat of partition, the inheritance passed into the reign of Edward IV considerably enlarged.<sup>(1)</sup> The internal threat to the unity of the inheritance had been averted but even as this passed another, external but equally grave, threat materialised; the danger of attainder and forfeiture in times of political disturbance. The part played by the family in the Wars of the Roses, and the fate of its inheritance in the later part of the fifteenth century is discussed in the following chapter.

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(1) For Edward IV and the Talbot estates see below pp 90-8



## III

THE TALBOTS AND THE WARS OF THE ROSES, 1453-1485

If the Wars of the Roses were still interpreted along the party lines of Lancaster and York, a strong case could be made out for treating John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, and his sons as diehard Lancastrians. John himself, it might be argued, was one of the main props of Queen Margaret's party and was killed defending his King at Northampton. His heir, John, third Earl, took part in the second battle of St. Albans and Towton and came out on the Lancastrian side in 1470. Although he died in 1473, his brother Gilbert took up the family cause and revenged their father on the house of York at the battle of Bosworth. So might run the argument. But one can no longer be certain of such clear alignments. Loyalties, as recent historians have established, were far more intricate and frail in the fifteenth century. There is hence need to examine in greater detail John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury's commitment to the Lancastrian cause and the relationships of his sons with the Yorkist Kings.

## (i)

An attempt to study the nature and significance of the 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury's career, particularly between 1453 and 1460, is bound to be

hampered by the shortage of evidence that dominates this period as a whole. Shrewsbury has been swept by historians into that category of late medieval barons of which V. H. H. Green has recently repeated: "With all the best will in the world it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the English nobility of the mid-fifteenth century lacked a sense of political responsibility".<sup>(1)</sup> In the most recent interpretation of the outbreak of the civil war this idea has been developed and linked with the problems of 'Bastard Feudalism', so that the outbreak of war is interpreted as an escalation of private feuds into one general dynastic struggle.<sup>(2)</sup> A few, like K. B. McFarlane, insisted that those involved were men not monsters, but there is still room for closer study of the careers of individual Peers. A history of Shrewsbury's career, which need not draw on substantial new material, shows whether he was man or monster.

R. L. Storey accepted the assumption that, when Shrewsbury was appointed Treasurer in 1456, he was a long-standing member of the court group.<sup>(3)</sup> An examination of his career up to that time hardly bears this

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(1) The Later Plantagenets, Revised Edition 1966, p293.

(2) R. L. Storey, The End of the House of Lancaster, Introduction, passim.

(3) Ibid, p182.



out. Before 1453, as heir to the Earldom, he took but little part in public affairs. The only office held by him was that of Chancellor of Ireland, to which he had been appointed on 12 August 1446, when his father was Lieutenant. He was apparently only once in Ireland - with his father in 1446-47.<sup>(1)</sup> On succeeding to the Earldom, he was inevitably drawn more into the affairs of the realm, but for three years he still remained much in the background. In these years (1453-56) he seems to have identified himself with neither Somerset nor York. He was certainly no supporter of Somerset, whose close association with his father and step-mother threatened his succession to the full Talbot inheritance. Yet at the same time, he appears already to have developed the reservations about York which, eventually came out into open hostility, for in 1450 York accused him of having "lain in wait for to hearken upon" him at the castle of Holt on his journey from Ireland,<sup>(2)</sup> and in 1452 he was involved in the indictment of traitors at Shrewsbury, who may have been York's followers at Dartford.

It was no doubt fortunate for Shrewsbury that his succession to the Earldom coincided with the King's illness and Somerset's subsequent eclipse. He was soon prominent in the councils which witnessed the

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(1) For Shrewsbury's earlier years see above Ch II, p34, and for Ireland see below Ch IV, p134.

(2) Paston Letters, i, p81; HMC, Shrewsbury Corporation Mss, p29.

establishment of York as Protector. The first council he is known to have attended was that of 11 November 1453, which marked York's return to favour.<sup>(1)</sup> He attended Parliament, which reassembled in February 1454, being one of the twelve lords delegated, in vain, to discover the King's choice of Chancellor in succession to Cardinal Kemp. He was present at several council meetings during the session, including that of 2 April, which witnessed Salisbury's investiture as Chancellor. And on the following day he was retained to keep the sea with the Earls of Salisbury, Wiltshire and Worcester and Lord Stourton.<sup>(2)</sup> But he was never a regular member of the Protector's council, and it appears that, after the dissolution of Parliament, his only attendance was at the two great councils of 6 May and 21 October.<sup>(3)</sup>

Shrewsbury was absent from councils between May and October 1454 for the very good reason that he was involved in the suppression of Exeter and Egremont's rising in the North. On 2 June he was appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer under York to inquire into disturbances in Newcastle.<sup>(4)</sup> It was probably this commission which was diverted to

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(1) CPR, 1452-61, p143.

(2) Rot Parl, v, pp240, 244 ff; CCR, 1447-54, pp508-9; Proc Priv Counc, vi, pp167, 171.

(3) Proc Priv Counc, vi, pp174-5, 216-7.

(4) CPR, 1452-61, p177.



deal with the rising in Yorkshire. The Protector and two of Shrewsbury's fellow commissioners opened proceedings at York on 15 June, and he joined them on 22 June.<sup>(1)</sup> How long the proceedings took is not known, but Shrewsbury appears to have remained in the North, for on 29 September he was appointed by Salisbury to head a second commission to suppress disturbances in Lancashire, probably connected with Egremont's continued manoeuvres against the Nevills.<sup>(2)</sup>

It is quite possible that Shrewsbury, through friendship with Ralph, Lord Cromwell, was not acting entirely impartially during the summer and autumn of 1454. Their alliance can be traced back to 1446 when Cromwell had been appointed the sole supervisor of Shrewsbury's will. Cromwell was also one of those who had supported him against the partition of his inheritance. In 1454 Shrewsbury became the senior lay lord of the feoffees to use to whom Cromwell entrusted his own lands.<sup>(3)</sup> There can be no doubt that Cromwell had a personal interest in the suppression of Exeter's rebellion, for he was involved in a bitter dispute with him over the manor of Ampthill, which had apparently come to a

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(1) R. L. Storey, op cit, p146.

(2) CPR, 1452-61, pp219-20. Egremont finally fell into Nevill hands at Stamford Bridge on 31 October.

(3) Testamenta Eboracensia, Surtees Society, xxx, p253; PRO, C 139/179; CPR, 1452-61, pp199-200. Cromwell had been fairly closely associated with Shrewsbury's father. In 1442-43 he was repaid a debt of £100 and gave four swans to Talbot (THAS, ii, p242).

head in 1452.<sup>(1)</sup> This dispute had still not been settled in March 1454, when Cromwell appealed to Parliament against his enemy's continued violence.<sup>(2)</sup> Moreover, in 1453, he had allied himself to the Nevills by marrying one of his nieces and heiresses to Salisbury's son, Thomas.<sup>(3)</sup> There is every indication, therefore, that in their rebellion Egremont and Exeter had as their immediate targets Salisbury and Cromwell. It may well have been his friendship with Cromwell that drew Shrewsbury into association with Salisbury in 1454.

A possible understanding between Salisbury, Cromwell and Shrewsbury in 1454 may also explain the behaviour of the latter two in 1455. Shrewsbury does not appear to have been at court at all from the time of the King's recovery (Christmas 1454) until after the first battle of St. Albans. Cromwell, on the other hand, attended the councils which witnessed the reinstatement of Somerset.<sup>(4)</sup> His experience

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(1) G. L. Harris, 'A Fifteenth Century Chronicle', BIHR (1965), p216.

(2) Rot Parl, v, p264.

(3) R. L. Storey, op cit, pp130, 143.

(4) Feodera, xi, pp361-3. Cromwell had also been prominent in councils following the King's collapse. He was uncommitted in the quarrel between York and Somerset, and probably still held by his declaration of 1449 that he wished to see 'a good accord amongst the lords'. It was no doubt because of this that he was one of the lords appointed to arbitrate between the Dukes on 4 March 1455.



was perhaps invaluable at a time of such constitutional importance and he may also have hoped, as a mediator, to see a reconciliation between the rival Dukes. If this were so, he was soon to be disappointed as Somerset rapidly regained his old influence. Perhaps fearing that Somerset would release Exeter and take up his cause, and mindful of his alliance with Salisbury, he withdrew from court (as did York and Warwick) between 4 and 7 March.<sup>(1)</sup> He did not attach himself to the Yorkists, but joined Shrewsbury, with whom he was reported to be marching towards St. Albans when the battle was fought.<sup>(2)</sup>

What Cromwell and Shrewsbury's intentions were in May 1455 one can only surmise. C. A. J. Armstrong asserts that "nothing indicates that (they) shrank from supporting the crown vi et armis" and dismisses the possibility that they were "hovering around" the battlefield awaiting the result.<sup>(3)</sup> But there is reason not to share his confidence. He concedes that Sir Thomas Stanley, who was in their company, may possibly have held back,<sup>(4)</sup> but this may equally be said of Cromwell and

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(1) Ibid.

(2) Paston Letters, iii, p30.

(3) C. A. J. Armstrong, 'Politics and the Battle of St. Albans, 1455', BIHR, xxxiii (1960), p18.

(4) Ibid. The Stanley family were to prove unrivalled at the art of awaiting on results. Stanley's son may have been betrothed to Salisbury's daughter in 1455. He was, as Controller, Cromwell's deputy as Chamberlain of the Household, and with Shrewsbury had in 1450 been one of those who had attempted to intercept York. For his career see J. S. Roskell, 'Lancaster Knights of the Shire', Chetham Society, New Series, 96, pp162-72.

Shrewsbury. Cromwell's record suggests, particularly if Exeter had been released,<sup>(1)</sup> that his ties and sympathies were with the Yorkists, but that he would be unwilling to fight against the Crown. Shrewsbury's attitude is not so clear. One of his executors, Thomas, Lord Clifford, for instance, was in the court party. But in the light of his own succession dispute he could not have welcomed Somerset's return to power. Indeed, in a slight way, the influence that his step-mother enjoyed with Somerset had already been demonstrated.<sup>(2)</sup> Cromwell and Shrewsbury, therefore, may well have had good cause to shrink from fighting for Somerset while at the same time not wishing to fight against the Crown. In the face of this dilemma, they probably did find it most politic to 'hover around' and await the verdict.

Following the battle, both Shrewsbury and Cromwell were initially well received and took their seats in the Parliament which assembled at

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- (1) C. A. J. Armstrong, loc cit, assumes, following the report of Giles' Chronicle, that Exeter was in fact released. R. L. Storey, op cit, p253, argues at length that this never in fact took place. But from his own evidence Exeter's whereabouts during the vital period (13 March - 26 June) is unaccountable. On 3 February he was to be transferred to Wallingford - an order dating surely from before, not after (as Storey maintains) Somerset's return to power. By 19 March Sir Humphrey Stafford had been ordered to bring Exeter before the King. On 26 June, three months later, and a month after St. Albans, he was back in custody at Wallingford. The possibility that he was freed by Somerset, but interred again after the battle, cannot be dismissed.
- (2) On 11 March Margaret, Countess of Shrewsbury, secured a licence for several of her prisoners to go to France to collect their ransoms. Shrewsbury did not receive a similar privilege until 28 July, after St. Albans (Deputy Keepers Reports, xlviii, pp404, 406).



Westminster on 9 July. Shrewsbury and his fellow lords were discharged, at their own request, from their commission to keep the sea. He was appointed instead to the committee established to organise the defences of Berwick and Calais.<sup>(1)</sup> Cromwell's household position was apparently confirmed.<sup>(2)</sup> The outward unity was disturbed, however, by a quarrel that flared up between Warwick and Cromwell. Cromwell, having excused himself to the King of responsibility for the battle of St. Albans, was accused by Warwick of being a liar and the 'begynner of all that journey'. Indeed there was such 'gruging' between the two that Cromwell found it prudent to seek the safety of Shrewsbury's lodging.<sup>(3)</sup> However, the quarrel did not prejudice the grant of the farm of the subsidy and alnage on cloth in Yorkshire to Shrewsbury and Cromwell on 5 August.<sup>(4)</sup>

The quarrel had perhaps left its mark for neither Shrewsbury nor Cromwell attended the second session of Parliament in which York was established as Protector again. But Cromwell's health was also failing

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(1) Rot Parl, v, pp279, 283.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Paston Letters, iii, p44. Warwick's suspicions of Cromwell may well have been aroused by the part Cromwell had played in the reinstatement of Somerset in February, and his failure to support the Yorkists openly at St. Albans.

(4) CFR, 1452-61, p104. On the other hand, Stanley was apparently exercising the office of Chamberlain on 6 August. Cromwell may have been relieved as a result of the quarrel with Warwick, although he could equally have handed over to Stanley, the Controller, because of failing health (J. S. Roskell, loc cit, p171).

and he died on 4 January 1456.<sup>(1)</sup> Having received a letter of warning from the council, Shrewsbury attended the third session which began ten days later. There is nothing to suggest that he had as yet openly broken with York. On 24 January he signed a petition with York, Warwick and others to grant the custody of St. Leonards, York, to Warwick's brother George. And he was also able to secure exemptions from the act of Resumption.<sup>(2)</sup>

Up to the end of York's second Protectorate (25 February 1456), though never in the foreground, Shrewsbury showed himself to be one of the many neutral and moderate peers, with his sympathies perhaps even inclined, latterly, towards York and certainly away from Somerset. Yet nine months later he became Treasurer through the influence of the resurgent court party. The summer of 1456 witnessed the decline once again of York's influence and the emergence of Queen Margaret, supported by James, Earl of Wiltshire, leading the court party. In a neutral position between the two lay Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham. The complexity of the situation was demonstrated during the councils held at Coventry in the autumn. The movement of the court away from London to the Midlands was a reflection of the Queen's growing influence. She was aided by the rebellious activity of York's lieutenants in Wales, which lost him much

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(1) CP, iii, p552. The year is mistakenly given as 1455.

(2) Proc Priv Counc, vi, p286; Rot Parl, v, p309.



sympathy. Herbert and Devereux were called to account at a great council held at the end of September. Buckingham joined in the criticism of York, but he prevented the Queen taking firmer measures against him. On the other hand, he could not prevent her from replacing his relations, and York's appointees, the Bouchiers, by John, Earl of Shrewsbury, as Treasurer on 5 October and Bishop Waynfleet of Winchester as Chancellor six days later.<sup>(1)</sup> These changes are generally considered to mark the return to power of the court party with Shrewsbury as one of the key members, but does even 5 October 1456 really mark his open conversion to the extreme Lancastrian cause?

There do not appear to be any new personal reasons for Shrewsbury to identify himself so closely with York's opponents. Nor is there any evidence of any new quarrel which might have led him to seek court advantage against York or his followers. Nor even does it appear that he was driven by bankruptcy to refill his coffers with the profits of office, for as Treasurer he was able to loan substantial sums to the Exchequer.<sup>(2)</sup> The case for his becoming committed to the court party rests primarily on his close connection with James, Earl of Wiltshire. He was Wiltshire's brother-in-law, having married his sister Elizabeth in the early 1440s.

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(1) R. L. Storey, op cit, p181; Ramsay, ii, p199.

(2) A. B. Steel, The Receipt of the Exchequer, p330. A total of £3,295 in two years.

Since then he had acted as a feoffee for him and in return appointed Wiltshire as one of his own.<sup>(1)</sup> But there is no sign of political alliance before March 1456, when the farm of the Yorkshire alnage was reissued jointly to their young heirs.<sup>(2)</sup>

Wiltshire was, of course, a committed opponent of York and an adherent of Somerset from 1451 at the latest, even though he was York's retainer, receiving an annuity of £15/6/8d. until at least 1453.<sup>(3)</sup> Soon after his father's death in August 1452 Wiltshire set his sights on the Lieutenancy of Ireland and secured his appointment on 12 May 1453. But his attempt to unseat York was frustrated by the King's collapse and York's return to power. Unable to maintain his claim he accepted defeat and witnessed the confirmation of York's appointment on 15 April 1454.<sup>(4)</sup>

- (1) See above p58. Shrewsbury became Wiltshire's feoffee in Ashby de la Zouche and other English lands on 10 February 1447. Wiltshire was one of Shrewsbury's feoffees in Blackmere (HMC, Calendar of Hastings Mss., i, p1; PRO, C 139/154). Wiltshire also held the castle of Kylpeke in Archenfield. A letter of Shrewsbury to Wiltshire has survived, addressed to his 'right worshipful and right entirely beloved brother', dated Woodstock, 24 July, on behalf of Alison Morles, 'oon of my pour tenants of Swindon' (BM, Ad Ms 25, 459, f 307).
- (2) CFR, 1452-61, p174.
- (3) J. T. Rosenthal, loc cit, pp189, 190. In 1451, as Bonville's supporter, he was opposed to the Earl of Devon and York.
- (4) See H. Wood, 'Two Chief Governors of Ireland at the same time', Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquarians, Ireland, December 1928, p156; R. L. Storey, op cit, p140. Wiltshire's father, James, Earl of Ormond, was York's Deputy Lieutenant from 1450 until his death.



Their rivalry had also been carried into Irish politics. Wiltshire was embroiled in a feud with Thomas Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, over claims to the manors of Maynooth and Rathmore. York consequently allied himself with Kildare.<sup>(1)</sup>

Shrewsbury, as Chancellor of Ireland since 1446, could hardly avoid the York-Wiltshire struggle for the control of the colony. He was naturally drawn to Wiltshire and his preference for Wiltshire could well have been reinforced by suspicions that Kildare still had designs on his office. In April 1448 Kildare had been granted the Chancellory in succession to Shrewsbury and had, in fact, taken possession, but Shrewsbury successfully petitioned Parliament in February 1449 for the return of the Great Seal. He subsequently held the office, apparently without interruption, until 1459.<sup>(2)</sup> The first certain evidence that he allied himself with Wiltshire in his feud with the Fitzgeralds appears in an anonymous letter of 1455. This letter, reporting the disorder caused by the Fitzgeralds and their allies against the Butlers in the

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(1) See H. Wood, loc cit; E. Curtis, 'Richard Duke of York as Viceroy of Ireland', ibid, 1932, pp176-7. Kildare became York's deputy in January 1455.

(2) CPR, 1446-52, p167; Rot Parl, v, p166b. On 5 April 1458 he appointed Michael, Archbishop of Dublin his deputy. After the attainder of the Coventry Parliament York seized the office and placed his son Edmund therein (CCR, 1454-61, p289; E. Curtis, loc cit, p183).

county of Wexford (Shrewsbury's lands), included instructions that copies should be made and sent to the two Earls.<sup>(1)</sup> It is highly likely, therefore, that Shrewsbury was drawn into opposition with York through his association, particularly in Ireland, with Wiltshire, yet it is puzzling that the rift with York occurred no earlier than 1456. One can only suggest that, although Shrewsbury took Wiltshire's side in Ireland, he was still able, at least until 1456, to maintain some degree of neutrality in English politics.

There is, of course, considerable evidence of Shrewsbury's court affiliation after October 1456. He was well rewarded by the Crown. On 14 May 1457 he was made Knight of the Garter and on 20 October following Keeper of the King's Mews. Another sinecure, the office of Chief Butler, was added on 6 May 1458. In 1459 he succeeded Lord Stanley as Chief Justice of Chester.<sup>(2)</sup> He was also granted the custody of the lordship of Woodstock, with Ralph Butler, Lord Sudeley, at an annual farm of £127/16/6d., and in 1458, with Jaspar, Earl of Pembroke, custody of all the lands of Edmund, Earl of Richmond, during the minority of his heir Henry Tudor.<sup>(3)</sup> He naturally benefitted from the confisca-

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(1) E. Curtis, loc cit, pp178-9.

(2) CP, xi, p704. On 28 January 1457 he was appointed a councillor of Edward, Prince of Wales (CPR, 1452-61, p359).

(3) CPR, 1452-61, pp360, 391, 433. On 10 June 1457 he received a preliminary grant with Viscount Beaumont of the Richmond Lincolnshire estates.



tions of the Yorkists after their attainder at the Coventry Parliament in 1459. He received 100 marks from Wakefield and in June 1460 the Stewardship of Ludlow. At the same time his son and heir received the Stewardship of Wakefield and the offices of Forester and Constable of Sandal.<sup>(1)</sup>

Contemporary literature adds colour to a list of offices and rewards. In a Lancastrian poem of 1458 ('The ship of state') his praises were sung in the following words:

"Ther is a toppe, the mast on hyght,  
The ship to defende, in all his ryght,  
Wt his foomen when he shalle fyght  
They dare him not a byde,  
The Erle of Shrovesbury the toppes name,  
He keepeth the shype from harm and blame".<sup>(2)</sup>

To the other side, the Yorkist lords at Calais in 1460, he was, with Beaumont and Wiltshire, one of "our mortalle and extreme enemyes, now and of long tyme past, hauving the guyding aboute the most noble persone of oure sayde souuerayn lorde". He was branded as one of the causers of the exclusion of the Yorkists from council, the lack of good government and the attainder of 1459.<sup>(3)</sup> From both sides the propaganda placed him as an important and powerful member of the Lancastrian party,

(1) Ibid, pp533, 594; CCR, 1454-61, p532.

(2) CP, xi, p705.

(3) T. S. Davies, Chronicle, pp88-9.

And yet, despite the evidence of rewards and propaganda, the actual record of his two years as Treasurer, years of marked moderation in court policy, suggest that he had by no means joined the extreme court party. One need not doubt that the Coventry council of October 1456 witnessed an attempt by Queen Margaret to seize control of the government, and that his appointment as Treasurer through the influence of Wiltshire was part of this. But the Queen failed to carry the King and his council against York and did not achieve a reversion to extreme anti-Yorkist policies, for it was reported that York left the council meeting "in right good conceyt with the king, but not with the Whene" (Queen).<sup>(1)</sup> The key figure at this council appears to have been Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, who had been close to the King's person through varying party fortunes since 1450. Such was the current rumour which James Gresham reported to John Paston on 16 October. He wrote that

"sum men say ne hadde my Lord of Bucks not have letted it my Lord of York had be distressed in his departyng..... Also it is said the Duke of Bucks takes right strangely that his brethren arn so sodeynly discharged from ther offices of Chauncellerie and Tresoryship; and that among other causeth hym that his opynyon is contrary to the Whenes entent, and many other also, as it is talked".<sup>(2)</sup>

Buckingham might have taken his relations' dismissal 'strangely' at first, but he must soon have reconciled himself to the appointment of Shrewsbury as Treasurer. He had, in fact, been the senior of Shrewsbury's feoffees

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(1) Ramsay, ii, p199; Paston Letters, iii, p108.

(2) Ibid.



during the partition dispute and the two evidently arranged the marriage of Shrewsbury's heir, John, to Buckingham's daughter, Katherine.<sup>(1)</sup> All the indications are that an alliance developed between them every bit as close as that Shrewsbury had lately enjoyed with Cromwell. That they were the King's closest companions and councillors in the next two years is suggested by the report of Sir John Wenlock's mission to Burgundy. The ambassadors found when they came to the King in the autumn of 1458 that "He had no lords excepting the Duke of Boquingham, the Earl of Cyrosbery, the great treasurer of England, the Lord de Roosce and certain bishops".<sup>(2)</sup> It is arguable, therefore, that Buckingham and Shrewsbury were the authors on the King's behalf of a conscious policy of reconciliation between York and the Queen and other warring factions.

The years 1456-58, from the report of the Coventry council onwards, provide several instances of the court endeavouring to placate York and his followers, no doubt contrary to the Queen's 'entent'. Over the first winter, although the court was involved in bringing his Lieutenants in Wales in order, no further moves were taken against York himself.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) The first child of this marriage was not born until 1468. It is assumed that it was made by their fathers.

(2) Wars of the English, i, p367.

(3) See R. L. Storey, op cit, pp180-1.

Indeed on 6 March he was re-appointed Lieutenant of Ireland.<sup>(1)</sup> This is frequently interpreted<sup>(2)</sup> as another attempt to banish him, yet it is equally possible that it was a conciliatory move, for York had already established in Ireland a secure refuge against political misfortune. Indeed, in view of Wiltshire's declared ambitions for the Lieutenancy, which were finally satisfied in 1459, it reinforces the impression that the Queen's party had failed to gain the principal voice in council, and that, in particular, Shrewsbury had disappointed his backers of the preceding October. In fact, throughout the following year York and his friends remained in favour. They were employed in the autumn measures taken to protect the realm after Pierre de Breze's raids on the southern coast. And, as a result of Exeter's failure to intercept de Breze, the Earl of Warwick was given the responsibility of keeping the sea for three years.<sup>(3)</sup> York was appointed to head a commission of array, with Shrewsbury under him, in Gloucestershire and Somerset on 26 September, and in December the same two were associated on assizes of arms in Herefordshire and Shropshire.<sup>(4)</sup> The public reconciliation of the contestants of St. Albans on 24 March 1458, known as the 'Loveday Award', has all the appearance of the culmination of a deliberate policy of appeasement.

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(1) CPR, 1452-61, p341.

(2) eg Ramsay, ii, p201.

(3) Ibid, pp201-2.

(4) CPR, 1452-61, pp403, 440-1.



Shrewsbury's personal role in this remains largely hidden. Not much is known, for instance, of the part he played as a councillor. He was in attendance throughout the winter of 1456-57 - at Kenilworth in January, Coventry in early March and in Hereford with powers as a commissioner of oyer and terminer in late March and April.<sup>(1)</sup> But for the councils held before the 'Loveday Award', his presence can be only assumed. As Treasurer he succeeded in increasing the receipts of the Exchequer, partly through heavy amercements. He himself loaned £3,295 and, perhaps more significantly, failed to take advantage of his position to cash tallies on this worth £1,438. Yet at the same time a special effort was made to honour York's tallies,<sup>(2)</sup> which suggests that he possibly sacrificed his own repayments in order to satisfy York. The impression that York's claims were receiving priority, at least over those of the Treasurer, is also given by the fact that, whereas York was given licence to export wool in settlement of royal debts on 28 March 1458, Shrewsbury waited a further four months until he received an equivalent privilege.<sup>(3)</sup> Thus there is a large body of evidence which

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(1) R. L. Storey, op cit, pp180-1; CPR, 1452-61, p348. Shrewsbury was in Hereford on 22 April when he wrote to the barons of the Exchequer (EM, Ad Ms 25459, f 305).

(2) A. B. Steel, The Receipt of the Exchequer, pp279-81, 330; E. F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, p513.

(3) Deputy Keepers Reports, xlvi, pp426, 429.

suggests that 5 October 1456 does not mark Shrewsbury's conversion to the extreme Lancastrian cause and that, to the contrary, he was actively involved in an attempt to bring about a reconciliation amongst the lords.

This attempt failed. On 30 October 1458 Shrewsbury was dismissed as Treasurer and replaced by Wiltshire.<sup>(1)</sup> This, not the changes of 1456, appears to have marked the real victory of the Queen's party and the beginning of its domination of the council. In November a new and aggressive policy towards the Yorkists was made apparent at a Great Council held at Westminster. There Warwick was dismissed as Captain of Calais and became involved in a brawl with the royal guard from which he had to fight his way out.<sup>(2)</sup> The court now embarked on a deliberate collision course with the Yorkists. The replacement of moderate officials such as Shrewsbury was the preliminary move to Queen Margaret's palace revolution and the rejection of moderate policies for extreme partisanship.

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(1) A. B. Steel, op cit, p420.

(2) R. L. Storey, op cit, p186.



The moderates failed, it would appear, because they proved incapable of restoring the power and authority of the Crown. They were also in an extremely vulnerable position for, insisting that the King's prerogative to choose his own ministers should be unimpeached, they were open to other influences on the King, particularly that of the Queen. Perhaps her opportunity appeared when York became involved in semi-regal negotiations with Burgundy and she was able to persuade the court that his intentions were treasonable. Once the moderate policies were discredited, the way was open for the extremists.

After 1458 Shrewsbury appears to have been content to follow the lead of the extremists. If he had any doubts, York's actions leading to the rout of Ludford in 1459 probably convinced him of the danger to the Crown. He came to the Coventry Parliament in December of that year and pledged himself to Henry VI and on the twenty-first of the month was appointed to commissions of array against the Yorkists in nine counties. In the following March he led a commission of oyer and terminer in the York and Nevill estates in Wales and the Marches, similar to that conducted by Wiltshire in the South.<sup>(1)</sup> He was now irrecoverably committed to the survival of the Lancastrian monarchy. When the Yorkists landed in June 1460 he was still with Buckingham, attending the King at Coventry. Wiltshire's nerve had already failed him and he had fled ignobly abroad.

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(1) CPR, 1452-61, pp557-60, 562, 602-4; Rot Parl, v, p351.

With what men they could muster the court marched south to meet the rebels before Northampton and there, on 10 July, loyal to the last, Buckingham and Shrewsbury were cut down before the King's tent, as ineffective in battle as they had been in peace.<sup>(1)</sup>

Politics are tortuous, never clear cut. This much Shrewsbury's career amply illustrates. He remains a shadowy figure. At no point does he appear to have been a particularly forceful or commanding person. His career gives the impression of a weak man content to follow where others led. He picked his way carefully between close and sometimes conflicting ties with Cromwell, Wiltshire and Buckingham but until the last year or two of his life he was hesitant. It is possible to trace, however, one consistent thread in his associations with Cromwell and Buckingham and his unwillingness to follow Wiltshire; a sincere and devoted loyalty to Henry VI. But more obviously than others, he appears to have been one whom events carried along. Thus he found himself in the extreme curialist camp. He was a man of integrity and honest intent caught up in a collapse of royal authority which he neither understood nor knew how to prevent. Historians have rarely doubted this of Duke Humphrey of Buckingham; Earl John of Shrewsbury deserves to stand, if not beside him, at least in his shadow.

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(1) For a description of the battle see R. I. Jack, 'A Quincentenary: the Battle of Northampton', Northamptonshire Past and Present, iii, No 1 (1960), pp21-4.



## (ii)

After the usurpation of Edward IV in 1461 the threat of attainder and forfeiture hung over the Talbot family. Not only had John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, been a determined opponent of the house of York, implicated in the harsh enactments of the Coventry Parliament, but also his son and heir, though only a boy of twelve, had been present in the Lancastrian army at the second battle of St. Albans (where he was knighted by Edward, Prince of Wales) and Towton.<sup>(1)</sup> But in the event, the new King did not attaint the young Earl. Having secured his person after Towton,<sup>(2)</sup> he could afford to be lenient. He was perhaps moved by the recollection of his father's close connection with the boy's grandfather, and appreciative of the dead Earl's moderation, but he was no doubt more conscious of the need to win the support of as many of the old nobility as he could. In the circumstances, leniency was both plausible and practical. There was one important exception made. The lordship of Goodrich, which had been granted to the custody of Warwick in November 1460 (confirmed on 7 May 1461) was on 12 May taken into the King's hands by Sir William Herbert "by reason of forfeiture". Herbert, who was given power to appoint his own officers in the lordship in August, held on to Goodrich for the rest of his life. This high-handed action appears to

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(1) CP, xi, p706; 'Gregory's Chronicle', p217; Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, p160.

(2) Ibid, p157. The first reference to him in the King's company is on the occasion of his journey to Scotland in December 1462.

have remained unchallenged by the Earl and was the only instance of the need to reward his supporters interfering with Edward's policy of leniency towards the Talbots. For the rest, with them, as with the Staffords, Edward IV was content to enjoy only his rights of wardship.<sup>(1)</sup>

There is a possibility, however, that Edward's leniency was tempered by his financial designs. Dr. B. P. Wolffe has argued that the Talbot lands were integrated into a new system of royal management, which was established to provide a substantial and reliable income independent of the Exchequer. But his evidence of the part played by the Talbot lands in this experiment is somewhat superficial, particularly as he failed to distinguish between the two separate minorities of the third Earl (1460-64) and, after his premature death, of the fourth Earl (1473-85).<sup>(2)</sup> A more thorough examination of Edward's policy towards the estates in these two minorities raises doubts as to whether they fitted into any system, or whether indeed financial considerations had any place in the King's mind.

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(1) CFR, 1452-61, p287; 1461-7, pp37-8; CPR, 1461-7, pp30, 99.

(2) 'The Management of the Royal Estates under the Yorkist Kings', EHR, lxxi (1956), pp3-6.



During the first minority, in fact, only a very small part of the Talbot inheritance was at the King's disposal. Sheffield, Worksop and portions from the rest of the lands, had been granted in dower to the Earl's mother in October 1460. She also held Shifnal, Bolas and the groups of southern manors around Swindon, in joint-enfeoffment.<sup>(1)</sup> Alton, Staffordshire, was in the hands of his father's feoffees, as were all his acquisitions in Derbyshire and Oxfordshire.<sup>(2)</sup> And, in addition, Painswick, Blackmere and the other lands in Shropshire were occupied in 1460 by the Dowager Countess Margaret, who also held dower in Corfham, Badgeworth and elsewhere.<sup>(3)</sup> With Goodrich alienated to Sir William Herbert, the King was left with a mere handful of small estates in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire.

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(1) CPR, 1452-61, p635; PRO, C 139/179. The Countess Elizabeth's portion was generous, and it was laid down in the letters granting the dower that she was to answer to the Exchequer for any surplus above the customary third. During the civil war of 1460-61 Elizabeth, in order to protect her lands and goods, feigned espousal to Walter Blount Esq. ("unequal and inferior to her in nobility and wealth") without, on her own confession, the least intention of accepting him as her husband. When the crisis was passed she petitioned the Pope to declare that she was not bound by this contract. On 15 June 1462 the Pope accordingly ordered the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield to decide what was canonical in the matter (Cal Pap Reg, xii, pp150-1). He presumably decided in Elizabeth's favour, for she did not marry Blount.

(2) PRO, C 139/179.

(3) See above p62. She also held a third part of the southern manors, the other two parts of which were in the hands of the Countess Elizabeth.

It was this handful that he placed under the control of Richard Croft as Receiver and Richard Fowler as (somewhat excessively) 'Receiver General of all the Talbot Lordships in the King's hands'.<sup>(1)</sup> In January 1462 Fowler was relieved of his arduous duties, and, perhaps as a result of the success of the large complex of royal estates established in 1461, the Talbot manors were merged into a new unit with wardship, escheated and forfeited lands in the three border counties.<sup>(2)</sup> On 1 January John Harper was appointed Auditor of a group of Mowbray, Stafford and Talbot lands, and on 30 January, John Milewater was appointed Receiver General of a parallel group of Beaufort, Butler, Stafford and Talbot estates.<sup>(3)</sup> Eventually, there were two Receivers General and three Auditors responsible for all the lands in the King's hands in Wales and the border counties.

But the contribution of the Talbot estates to this administrative experiment was not very extensive. It was cut down even further when,

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- (1) CPR, 1461-67, pp41-2. Croft, at one time tutor of the King, was Receiver of the Earldom of March, and Fowler was King's Solicitor. For notes on their careers, see Wedgwood, p237; B. P. Wolfe, loc cit, p26.
- (2) B. P. Wolfe, loc cit, pp4-5.
- (3) CPR, 1461-67, p91 bis. Harper had been the Talbot Auditor since 1443 at the latest. (For his career, see below p309 Milewater had been one of Richard of York's senior officials (J. T. Rosenthal, 'The Estates and Finances of Richard, Duke of York', Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, ii, p177). He may also have served John, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury for he was pardoned debts to him of £83/6/8d. on 14 May 1458 (CPR, 1452-61, p381). The employment of officials with Talbot connections warns against over emphasis of the novelty of the King's measures.



on 11 June 1463, several of the manors were removed and granted to the young Earl for his maintenance.<sup>(1)</sup> A year later, although still only sixteen, John was given licence to enter the remainder of the lands, with the special exception of Goodrich.<sup>(2)</sup> The King's goodwill was demonstrated yet again in 1466 when, apparently on the Earl's petition, he secured his entry into Blackmere and other Shropshire lands at the expense of the Dowager Countess Margaret.<sup>(3)</sup> Edward IV, it seems, considered the reconciliation of the Earl of greater value than the income of a few of his estates.

The evidence of the second minority is perhaps of greater significance. Not only was it longer, but also the King was stronger. The number of estates at Edward's disposal was again complicated by the matter of dower. The Countess Elizabeth was still alive, and dower had also to be set aside for the third Earl's widow, Katherine. She was granted lands in Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Derbyshire and the southern counties.<sup>(4)</sup> This having been settled in September/October 1473, Edward appointed Richard Greenway Auditor General, Richard Croft Receiver of

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(1) CPR, 1461-67, p268. They were Farnham (Buckinghamshire) and two parts of Badgeworth, Huntley, Longhope, Whaddon and Corfham. This left Credenhill, Eccleswall, Lea and Strangeford in the King's hands.

(2) Ibid, p339. 24 August 1464.

(3) See above p61.

(4) CPR, 1467-77, p357. Fifteen manors were involved.

Blackmere, Corfham and Goodrich, and Thomas Stidolff Receiver of the remaining estates in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.<sup>(1)</sup> The Countess Elizabeth, however, died before the end of 1473, John Swift being appointed the King's Receiver of Sheffield.<sup>(2)</sup> Her death necessitated a re-arrangement in Katherine's dower, parcels from five manors being added in March 1475 to bring her portion up to the customary third.<sup>(3)</sup> But Katherine herself died a year later and, for the first time, the entire inheritance was left at Edward's disposal.

Once again, Edward proved less interested in direct exploitation, preferring to employ the estates for patronage. During this second minority William, Lord Hastings, was the chief beneficiary. On 31 July 1474 he had been granted the custody of Sheffield in addition to the wardship and marriage of the young Earl George.<sup>(4)</sup> The rest was initially granted to the Queen on 24 June 1475.<sup>(5)</sup> A year later, apparently

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- (1) Ibid, pp397, 411. Both Greenway and Stidolff were, like Croft, drawn from the royal administration.
- (2) Ibid, p442. Swift had probably been the Countess' Receiver. His father, William, had served John, first Earl, also as Receiver thirty years earlier.
- (3) Ibid, p357.
- (4) Ibid, p460. Sheffield was granted in payment of a debt due to him from the King of 1,500 marks. But Hastings also undertook to pay the King the same sum for the wardship and marriage of George. In 1477 this was cancelled against yet another sum of 2,500 marks owed by the Queen to Hastings. George married Hastings' daughter Anne before 1481 (CPR, 1476-85, p36; CP, xi, p709)
- (5) CPR, 1467-77, pp539, 561-2.



Katherine's dower was added to Hastings' grant and eventually, in 1478, the custody of the greater part of the inheritance was re-arranged in his favour, the Queen surrendering to him all her estates (twenty-one) in seven counties, retaining only those in Shropshire and Herefordshire.<sup>(1)</sup> Under the terms of this final settlement Hastings agreed to pay £300 per annum for the custody of his share (about two-thirds) of the inheritance. It was worth at least twice this much. The lordship of Sheffield alone was charged with over £425 in arrears and issues in 1479-80, and in 1479 at least £200 was delivered to Hastings in cash. He clearly enjoyed most advantageous terms.<sup>(2)</sup>

Yet one might still expect that those lands in Shropshire and Herefordshire, which remained permanently in the King's or Queen's hands felt the pressure of the King's exploitation, but surviving accounts presented by Richard Croft and his ministers and the record of the Patent Rolls reveal that this was far from the case.<sup>(3)</sup> The outstanding feature

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(1) Ibid, 1476-85, pp120-1.

(2) THAS, vi, p19. He had already held the estates that had formed Katherine's dower without rendering account for a year from her death until Michaelmas 1477 (CPR, 1476-85, pp120-1).

(3) Accounts of all the estates involved, except Eccleswall and Corfham, have survived. Accounts of the Shropshire estates, covering 1473-78, are to be found in BP 87; Richard Croft's account for Shropshire, 1477-78, and Shropshire and Herefordshire, 1481-82, are in PRO, SC 6/1122/11, 12.

in the administration of these estates was their employment for patronage in the form of annuities and fees, the majority of which were granted within the first six months of the minority. The chief beneficiaries here were the surviving members of the family of the Earl of Shrewsbury. Sir Gilbert Talbot, his elder uncle, was granted £66/13/4d. from Blackmere and the office of Steward with its fee of £5 on 8 October 1473; Christopher Talbot, clerk, the younger uncle, was granted £26/13/4d. from Shifnal in November; and in the following March their half-cousin, Sir Humphrey Talbot, who had initially been granted £40 from Goodrich and Archenfield, had his annuity transferred to Blackmere as well.<sup>(1)</sup> Smaller annuities and fees were subsequently paid out from the other Shropshire estates to several courtiers,<sup>(2)</sup> and the issues of Marbury (over £20) were set aside for Sir William Stanley, the Treasurer of the Principality of Chester.<sup>(3)</sup> In all, over £200 was granted in annuities and fees on estates which were worth about £375 in clear value. With allowance for expenditure, this left about £150 per annum to be delivered, of which part was paid directly by the ministers of Bitterley, Tasley and Wrockwardine and the remainder by

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(1) CPR, 1467-77, pp402, 410-1, 440.

(2) Ibid, pp401-2; 1476-85, p47. The largest of these were £13/6/8d. from Cheswardine to Roger Bickeley, valet of the King; £10 from Sutton Maddock to Thomas Brereton; and £6/13/4d. to Edmund Dudley as Steward of Alberbury.

(3) BP, 87, Marbury, 1477-78.



Richard Croft, to the Treasurer of the Household. In 1477-78, for instance, the ministers delivered £59/12/11½d. and Croft £86/0/8d.<sup>(1)</sup>

There were apparently no annuities charged to the Herefordshire estates. Nevertheless, in Goodrich and Archenfield in 1481-82, almost half the issues received by Croft (£50/18/6½d.) were absorbed in fees and wages. With these fees deducted all the Herefordshire estates raised just under £50 in that year. But by this time, it appears, Croft's management was running into difficulties, for he only delivered £75 to the Household for the Shropshire and Herefordshire estates combined.<sup>(2)</sup> Although kept in hand, therefore, these estates were exploited, financially, no more thoroughly than the rest of the inheritance. Nor was this balanced by an intensification in the economic exploitation, for Blackmere in the 1470s produced on average £20 per annum less than it did in the 1430s.<sup>(3)</sup> The case of Goodrich is even more illuminating. In William Herbert's hand, between 1465 and 1468, the lordship yielded £346/3/4d. in issues and arrears, over twice as much a year as paid to Richard Croft in 1481-82. The King's exploitation pales beside the ruthlessness of Herbert.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) BP 87/1477-78; PRO, SC 6/1122/11.

(2) PRO, SC 6/1122/12. £20 remained in arrears and a further £30 were claimed as fees.

(3) See below Ch IX passim.

(4) National Library of Wales, Badminton Mss 1501-03.

During the second minority Edward IV could have received barely fifty per cent of the annual value of the Talbot estates. Nor were the estates integrated into any system of royal estate management. Edward's policy had, indeed, features more reminiscent of traditional attitudes and methods. There was nothing novel in granting the custody of estates, on very generous terms, to the King's righthand man, nor in tapping them as a source of patronage, nor even when sinecures were not required, in continuing to employ at all levels the officials appointed by the Talbots.<sup>(1)</sup> There was more of the old than of the new in the Yorkist management of the Talbot estates.

Edward's attitude was determined primarily by his political, not his financial, needs. His policy towards the Talbots and their estates was directed towards gaining their support. How successful was he? Although Edward treated John, 3rd Earl of Shrewsbury, with magnanimity, it was in fact to George, Duke of Clarence, that the Earl turned in the later 1460s. Clarence was definitely Shrewsbury's lord by 1467, in which year he supported him and Henry Vernon in their feud with Lord Grey of

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(1) Although William Clerk, Marshal of the King's Hall, was granted the Stewardship of Sutton Maddock, Sir Richard Harcourt was confirmed as Steward of Bampton, Shrivenham and Swindon, whilst at the lower level William Downton and Bartholomew Brown remained Bailiff and Parker of Blackmere (CPR, 1467-77, pp408, 439, 440; 1476-85, p34).



Codnor.<sup>(1)</sup> He was probably also godfather to Shrewsbury's heir, born in 1468, who appears to have been named in his honour. During the crises of 1469-71, Shrewsbury, although he acted a good deal more circumspectly, followed Clarence. A report was carried to Milan in May 1469 that he joined Warwick and Clarence after the Lincolnshire Rebellion, and although this is not confirmed by any other source, he did purchase a general pardon for all offences on 26 April.<sup>(2)</sup> His one definite action seems to have been to join Warwick and Clarence in their triumphal march to London in October 1470.<sup>(3)</sup> He appears to have been one of the Readeption

- (1) Shrewsbury's sister Anne was married to Henry Vernon, the eldest son and heir of Sir William Vernon of Haddon. The quarrel came to a head in a skirmish near Derby on 3 December in which Vernon's brother, Roger, was killed. Sessions were held at Derby on 20 April 1468 before Clarence, Hastings and Rivers, where it was found that Grey's men were indeed guilty of the murder but that all parties were guilty of distributing liveries, including Shrewsbury. Evidence was presented to the Justices that Shrewsbury was at Bakewell on 23 February 1468 where he distributed his badge, a talbot argent, to nineteen or more men, all recruited locally. (The talbot argent is to be seen emblazoned on the ceiling of the dining-room (c1490) of Haddon Hall). According to the pseudo William Worcester, Grey was supported by 'those in favour about the king' - ie Rivers and Hastings, whose retainer he had been since 1464. In the summer of 1468 all parties raised recognizances not to harm each other, or the jurors who had served at the sessions in April. (See J. G. Bellamy, 'Justice under the Yorkist Kings', American Journal of Legal History, ix, pp151-2; Wars of the English, ii, p789; Wedgwood, p907; W. H. Dunham, Lord Hastings' Indentured Retainers, pp25, 79; CCR, 1468-76, pp25-6; PRO, KB 9/13/23.
- (2) Cal State Papers, Milan, 1385-1618, p137; CPR, 1467-77, p210.
- (3) E. F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, p561

government's key men in the North Midlands and the Welsh Marches, sitting on the bench and commissions in Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.<sup>(1)</sup>

But not even Clarence was sure of him when Edward returned in 1471. On 15 March he wrote from Bristol to Henry Vernon asking him to discover "the desposyn of the Erell of Shrowsbere and the labor wuche is by hem and the band<sup>(2)</sup> wyche ye haf sarteveyed me ys late made by hem". The next day he followed this up by asking Vernon to set spies on the Earl. But by 30 March Clarence was relieved to hear of "the goode and lovyng disposiccion towards us of our cousin of Shrovesbury", although the Earl had not gone so far as to offer to join him.<sup>(3)</sup> Shrewsbury's extreme caution is confirmed by the knowledge that he spent the crucial

- (1) CPR, 1467-77, pp247, 249. Another was Lord Stanley who visited Shrewsbury at Blackmere during the year 1470-71 (BP 82/1470-71, Receiver, attachment, p4).
- (2) Reference to the raising of this 'band' is to be found in the Blackmere Receiver's account for 1470-71. In a booklet attached to the account listing divers payments 'sythen his last accounte' (the first use of English in the accounts) the Receiver included the costs incurred in 'fetching' Madoc ap Meredith, Cartwright and John ap Neret to the lord and sending 'warnings' to the Bailiffs of Tasley, Wrockwardine, Corfham, Culmington, Bitterley and Alberbury (BP 87/1470-71, Receiver, attachment, p4d).
- (3) HMC, Calendar of Rutland Mss, i, pp2-4.



month of April watching on events from his manor house at Blackmere.<sup>(1)</sup>

The motive behind Shrewsbury's equivocal attitude was no doubt primarily a desire to avoid the risks of commitment.<sup>(2)</sup> Nevertheless, Clarence's reconciliation with Edward opened the way for his full assimilation into the Yorkist fold. In the two years that followed before his death he was entrusted with various royal tasks and liberally rewarded. He was one of the commissioners appointed to treat with the Scots in August 1471 and to suppress the King's enemies in North Wales in September, when he was also granted the office of Chief Justice of North Wales for life. He was also granted the reversion of the manors of Adderley, Shropshire, and Orston, Nottinghamshire, forfeited from Lord Roos. In 1473 he was one of those appointed a tutor of Edward, Prince of Wales.<sup>(3)</sup> Edward had cause to be satisfied, for if he had not been wholly with him in 1469-71, he had equally never been wholly against

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(1) BP 87/1470-71. An interesting side-light is thrown on his caution by the method of dating employed in the Receiver's account for this year. Despite his show of support for the Readeption, the Receiver's receipts dated 18 November and 6 February used 'anno domini' instead of the customary regnal years. It was not until 6 March that the format 'the yere from the putting down of our suffran Lord King Henry the sext. the 49 and of the redemcion of his royal power the 1st' was adopted. After Edward's return, his regnal years were immediately readopted.

(2) One of his brothers, James, did commit himself and fought at either Barnet or Tewkesbury (on which side it is not known) and died of his wounds at Shifnal (J. Hunter, Hallamshire, pp47-8).

(3) CP, xi, p707; CPR, 1467-77, p294.

him, and after 1471 he was clearly drawn more deeply into the Yorkist regime.

After 1473 the Earl's brother, Gilbert Talbot, became the head of the family and continued to enjoy the favour of the King. He was an Esquire of the body, and in addition to the annuity from Blackmere was granted the custody of Wexford during the minority of his nephew. He served on the King's expedition to France in 1475, and on Shropshire commissions from 1477.<sup>(1)</sup> But in 1483 the usurpation of Richard III led to Gilbert's estrangement from the Crown. He was promptly removed from the bench in Shropshire and lost his annuity from Blackmere, although that of his kinsman Humphrey was confirmed and his brother Christopher was later presented to St. Alkmunds, Whitchurch. In July 1484 he felt the need to purchase a pardon, but he declared his hand in August 1485 when he became Henry Tudor's first English adherent. He subsequently commanded the right wing at Bosworth with a personal following of five hundred men drawn from the Earldom of Shrewsbury, was wounded in battle, and was the first to be knighted by the new King on the field.<sup>(2)</sup> Richard III's brief reign effectively demonstrated the success and wisdom of his brother's policy of reconciliation towards the Talbot family.

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(1) Wedgwood, p838.

(2) CPR, 1476-85, pp417, 497, 570; Wedgwood, p838; Polydore Vergil, History, p218. Gilbert's retinue at Bosworth may have been substantially the same as his brother's 'band' in 1471 (see above p100).



P A R T   T W O

THE CAREER OF JOHN,  
FIRST EARL OF SHREWSBURY

## IV

THE TALBOTS AND IRELAND, 1414-1453

The Talbots were a family with well established Irish connections. As early as 1174 a Richard Talbot had been granted Malahide on the coast near Dublin and his descendants, cousins of the English family, were still in possession during the fifteenth century.<sup>(1)</sup> In the fourteenth century the English branch of the family renewed its connections when Gilbert, 3rd Lord Talbot, married Pernel, daughter of James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond. The marriage did not lead to any territorial foothold in Ireland, but it did lead to a closer personal association. In 1367, for instance, Gilbert Talbot and his brother-in-law, James, 2nd Earl, were executors of Eleanor, James' mother, Gilbert also being an administrator of her goods and chattels.<sup>(2)</sup> Later, in 1380, Richard, 4th Lord Talbot, was present at Dublin castle when the Bishop of Cloyne slandered his uncle Ormond, and acted as a witness in the proceedings that followed.<sup>(3)</sup> Richard Talbot maintained his links with Ireland. In 1386 he received protection when intending to visit Ireland again and although he is not known to have gone until 1394, his uncle acted as his attorney there.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, The Reign of Henry V, i, p63.

(2) Calendar of Ormond Deeds, iii, ed E. Curtis, pp156-8. Thomas Talbot was also Ormond's Constable at Arklow (1357-69) (ibid, ii, pp27-8).

(3) Ibid, iii, pp168-71.

(4) CPR, 1385-89, pp189-277; 1388-92, p226; 1391-6, p70.



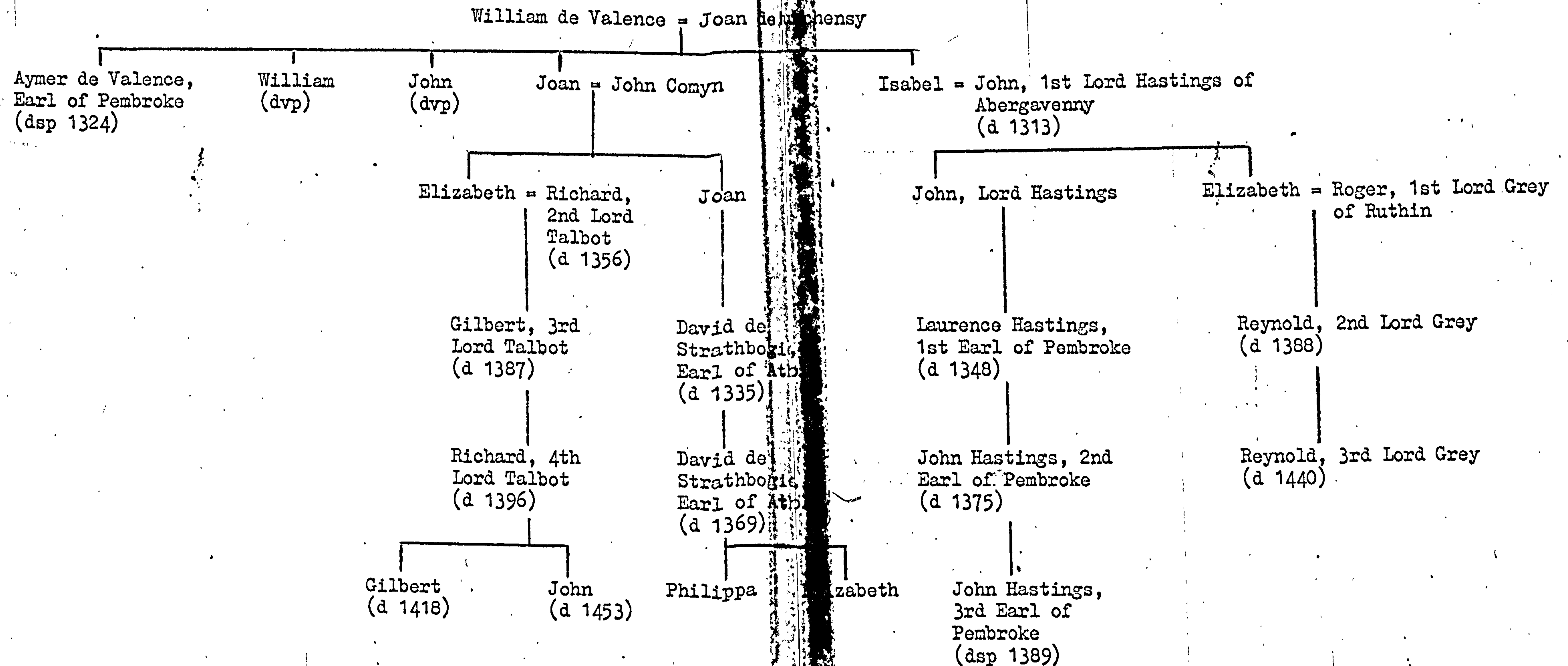
Richard Talbot's interest in Ireland was extended by his succession in 1389 to a claim to the lands of the Earldom of Pembroke, which included the lordship of Wexford. As grandson of Elizabeth Comyn, a daughter of Joan, younger sister of Aymer de Valence, Talbot was one of the possible heirs of John Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, when he died without issue. Another claimant was Reginald, Lord Grey of Ruthin, who was found Hastings' rightful heir and eventually secured possession of his English lands.<sup>(1)</sup> But the title to Wexford was never formally decided and the dispute continued in a desultory fashion over many years, with the Crown eventually recognising two titles to the lordship. One reason why this happened was no doubt because the title was more or less empty. The lordship was described in 1399 as being derelict and largely in Irish hands and throughout the fifteenth century it was raided and plundered.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Complete Peerage maintains that Richard Talbot was initially awarded Wexford on the strength of his mother's claim, but in 1410 Grey was styling himself as Lord of Wexford.<sup>(3)</sup> John Talbot's appoint-

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- (1) See R. I. Jack, 'Entail and Descent: the Hastings Inheritance 1370-1436', BIHR, xxxviii, No 97 (May 1965), p1 ff, for a detailed account of the dispute and Talbot's part in it.
- (2) E. Curtis, History of Medieval Ireland, p282.
- (3) CP, xi, p699; CFR, 1391-9, p16; R. I. Jack, loc cit, p15.

TABLE II

Talbot Claim to Earldom of Pembroke and Oxford Lordship





ment as Lieutenant in 1414 gave his family an advantage which he did not fail to exploit. When his brother died in 1418 John took the lordship into the King's hands. Grey petitioned against this action, asking that records should be produced by the Chancellor of Ireland which would show his correct title.<sup>(1)</sup> This was apparently of no avail; certainly no official decision was recorded. Talbot, however, succeeded in keeping possession, and from 1421 acted as the rightful lord. On 10 April 1425, for instance, he made a treaty with Donat O'Brian, who promised to do no harm to his lordship of Wexford, and in the following years he appointed his own officers there.<sup>(2)</sup> Eventually, in 1446, he assumed the title of Earl of Wexford, and his descendants have used the title ever since. But Grey's descendants also continued to use the title of Lord of Wexford. Hence two, imaginary, titles were recognised, although in practice the Talbots secured possession.<sup>(3)</sup>

Talbot also inherited through his first wife, Maud Nevill, another more certain, but profitless, Irish claim to the Verdon lordship of

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(1) Chancery Proceedings, Elizabeth I, ii, pvii.

(2) Rot Pat Claus Hib, pp237, 238b, 241b.

(3) CPR, 1441-6, p448; CP, x, p700. In the patent creating Talbot Earl of Waterford, 17 July 1446, he was styled Earl of Wexford as well as Shrewsbury. The titles of Hastings and Wexford were automatically assigned to Grey's son in 1463 when he was created Earl of Kent. But, in 1473 Wexford was considered to be in the King's hands as part of the Talbot inheritance.

Westmeath, which passed to the Lords Furnival in 1318.<sup>(1)</sup> But the lordship had fallen into Irish hands and when she died in 1422 Maud, Lady Furnival was possessed of only two manors in Ireland worth £5 between them.<sup>(2)</sup> But the claim to Westmeath as well as Wexford made Talbot, in title, one of the more important absentee landlords. This, and his close relationship with the Earls of Ormond, qualified him as a suitable candidate for the Lieutenancy of Ireland, to which he was appointed on 24 February 1414.

The Lieutenancy of Ireland in the fifteenth century was a hard and thankless post. For most of the century Ireland was in a state little short of anarchy. Richard II, it is true, had tried to reconstitute and revitalise the English lordship. But after his brief success Ireland was once more relegated to a place of minor importance by the English kings. Indeed, for rulers lacking in resources - and often statesmanship - Ireland was a welcome and obvious economy. Consequently, starved of support, the English lordship remained little more than nominal.

The Irish, wrote Richard II, were divided into "three kinds of people, the wild Irish, our enemies, the Irish rebels and the obedient English". The wild Irish, in their various kingdoms and clans, controlled most of

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(1) CP, xii, Pt 2, pp251-2.

(2) Rot Pat Claus Hib, p225.



the country. The North and West were hardly ever penetrated by the English and were completely free from English domination. The Irish rebels were the descendants of the more remote Norman colonial families who had 'gone native' and were hardly distinguishable from the pure Irish themselves. The obedient English could be divided into two groups: the great Anglo-Irish families, particularly the Butlers and Fitzgeralds, who held vast estates in the Irish marches,<sup>(1)</sup> and the inhabitants of the small area under direct military control of the English government. This area shrank noticeably during the Lancastrian period. Richard II left the four counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Louth under English control. During Henry VI's reign it shrank to the borders later formalised as the Pale under Henry VII. In 1429 Archbishop Swayne of Armagh wrote to the English government that the English 'ground' was "not so much of quantity as is one shire in England". A council report of 1435 specified that there was "scarcely thirty miles in length or twenty miles in breadth of the counties of Dublin, Meath, Louth and Kildare out of the subjection of our enemies".<sup>(2)</sup> Outside this area the English held tenuously to the ports of Waterford, Wexford, Cork and Limerick.

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(1) The Butlers, Earls of Ormond, held Kilkenny; the Fitzgeralds, Earls of Desmond, parts of the county of Cork. The O'Neills of Ulster were also Anglo-Irish, though their loyalty to the Crown was far less certain.

(2) J. T. Gilbert, History of the Viceroys of Ireland, pp330, 573.

It was against the English 'ground' that the wild Irish and English rebels waged continual warfare. The individual clans had neither the unity nor the desire to throw out the English. Instead they enjoyed plundering or extorting ransoms from the cultivated borders of the English-held land.<sup>(1)</sup> The Butlers and Fitzgeralds, more exposed to the Irish raids, survived by coming to terms or buying them off.<sup>(2)</sup> The first task of the Lieutenant, therefore, was military, to protect the 'ground' and to try to subdue the Irish. But his resources never allowed him to attempt more than punitive raids which merely achieved formal submission from the chieftains, which they would revoke at the first opportunity. Hence the 1435 report complained that "during the last thirty years the Lieutenants did not invade the Irish but for a sudden journey or hosting and made no residence amongst the people".<sup>(3)</sup>

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- (1) The Irish themselves were semi-nomadic at this time, living largely on their cattle. They showed their lack of civilisation by running around practically naked, showing every part of the body "with as little shame as we our faces". For a contemporary description see the account of Raymond of Perillos, printed by J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, i, pp74-5.
- (2) Known as 'black rent'. One of the accusations levelled against Ormond in 1423 was that he had set his lordship of Oghtryn to black rent of 12 marks paid to the wife of Calagh O'Connor (Rot Parl, iv, p198). The Fitzgeralds simply went 'native' in the fifteenth century.
- (3) J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p332.



But the task of pacifying the Irish was made doubly difficult by the inefficiency and division within the English administration. There were very few periods of stability in government. The Lieutenants were frequently replaced. Between 1414 and 1450 there were eleven changes. A petition of the Irish parliament to England in 1429 went so far as to complain of this.<sup>(1)</sup> And in addition the Lieutenants frequently absented themselves. Talbot spent only twenty-eight months of six years actually in Ireland. During these absences the Lieutenant's duties were carried out by a deputy with the official title of Justiciar.<sup>(2)</sup> Since the Justiciar rarely had the same powers, this only increased the instability of government. But, regardless of this, the Lieutenant could achieve little without supplies. Bankruptcy was their major problem. Thomas of Lancaster had been granted 12,000 marks per annum in 1401. Talbot was granted only 4,000 per annum. The grant remained at this level for most of Henry VI's reign.<sup>(3)</sup> Ireland itself was expected to augment this. In 1421 Ormond was voted a total of 1,400 marks by the Irish Parliament and Great Council. But this was exceptionally large. In 1419 the Lieutenant received only 300.<sup>(4)</sup> His resources were often not enough

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(1) J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p324.

(2) The office is an interesting survival from Anglo-Norman England.

(3) H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, The Irish Parliament in the Middle Ages, pp152-3.

(4) Ibid, p157; H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, Parliament and Councils of Medieval Ireland, Vol i, pxxvi.

to pay even his soldiers. In 1417 Talbot feared mutiny. They were, anyway, forced to live permanently off the land. By far the most common complaint against him was that he was extortionate and did not pay for what he took.<sup>(1)</sup> Indeed, it is debatable whether the inhabitants of the English 'ground' suffered more from their enemies or from their protectors. One consequence certainly was the steady migration of these inhabitants to England, against which the government from time to time vainly legislated.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1428 Archbishop Swayne summed up for the King this general malaise.

"If ye my lord..... would ordain a great power hither to withstand the malice of the enemies; and whosoever that shall have the government of this land that he find sufficient surety to keep the land..... and that he make true payment to the common people for him and his soldiers, and then he take no subsidies nor tallages for them; then I suppose with God's Grace this country will be relieved and saved unto the king's age."<sup>(3)</sup>

The Lieutenant governed through a 'privy' council, composed generally of the chief administrative and legislative officers; the Treasurer, Chancellor, Chief Justice of the King's Bench and one or

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(1) For example, in 1417 (Proc Priv Counc, ii, p219) and 1435 (J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p33).

(2) E. Curtis, op cit, pp283-4, 289-90. J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p573-4.

(3) Ibid. He estimated that at least £20,000 was owed on dud tallies.



two under-officials, augmented by one or both the Archbishops.<sup>(1)</sup> He could call upon the Irish Parliament or a Great Council for legislation and meagre subsidies. These institutions also provided the formal arena for the sanctioning of frequent petitions and reports sent back to England, usually praising the Lieutenant in his presence; damning him in his absence. Generally speaking, a parliament was elected and a great council summoned, but the composition and function of the two were similar.<sup>(2)</sup> In time of faction, which was most of the time, they were particularly open to corruption, there being frequent complaints of packing.<sup>(3)</sup> Indeed the whole government was severely hampered by the great feud which developed between the Butlers and the Talbots, the total effect of which was to undermine the English position in Ireland even further.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) For a discussion of the Irish Council, see H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, The Irish Parliament in the Middle Ages, pp162-71.

(2) See ibid, pp187-9.

(3) A petition of 1430 complained that "the nobles and great men fill it (Parliament) with their nominees who little regard the weal of the king or his subjects" (E. Curtis, op cit, p300). In 1442 Ormond was also accused of packing (J. Graves, The King's Council in Ireland (Rolls Series 69), p286.)

(4) For further discussion of this, see below p119 ff.

This, therefore, was the condition of the land to which John Talbot was appointed Lieutenant. His first acts were to appoint his chief officers of state. Hugh Burgh, his retainer, was made Treasurer and Lawrence Merbury, Burgh's predecessor, who had come to England to report on the state of affairs in Ireland, became Chancellor.<sup>(1)</sup> Preparations for his journey took most of the summer. Burgh and Merbury were sent on in advance, shipping and provisions were gathered and Dublin castle was made ready. Eventually he landed at Dalkeith on 10 November.<sup>(2)</sup> He was destined to spend only two brief periods of residence in Ireland; the first, for fifteen months until February 1416; the second, for fourteen months from May 1418 until July 1419.<sup>(3)</sup> But this was sufficient for him to make a deep impact on the country.

In his first period of residence Talbot revealed those qualities of vigour and ruthlessness that were later to win him renown in France. He was preoccupied largely in securing the borders of the English 'ground' and crushing the neighbouring Irish.<sup>(4)</sup> The summer of 1415,

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(1) J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, i, p61.

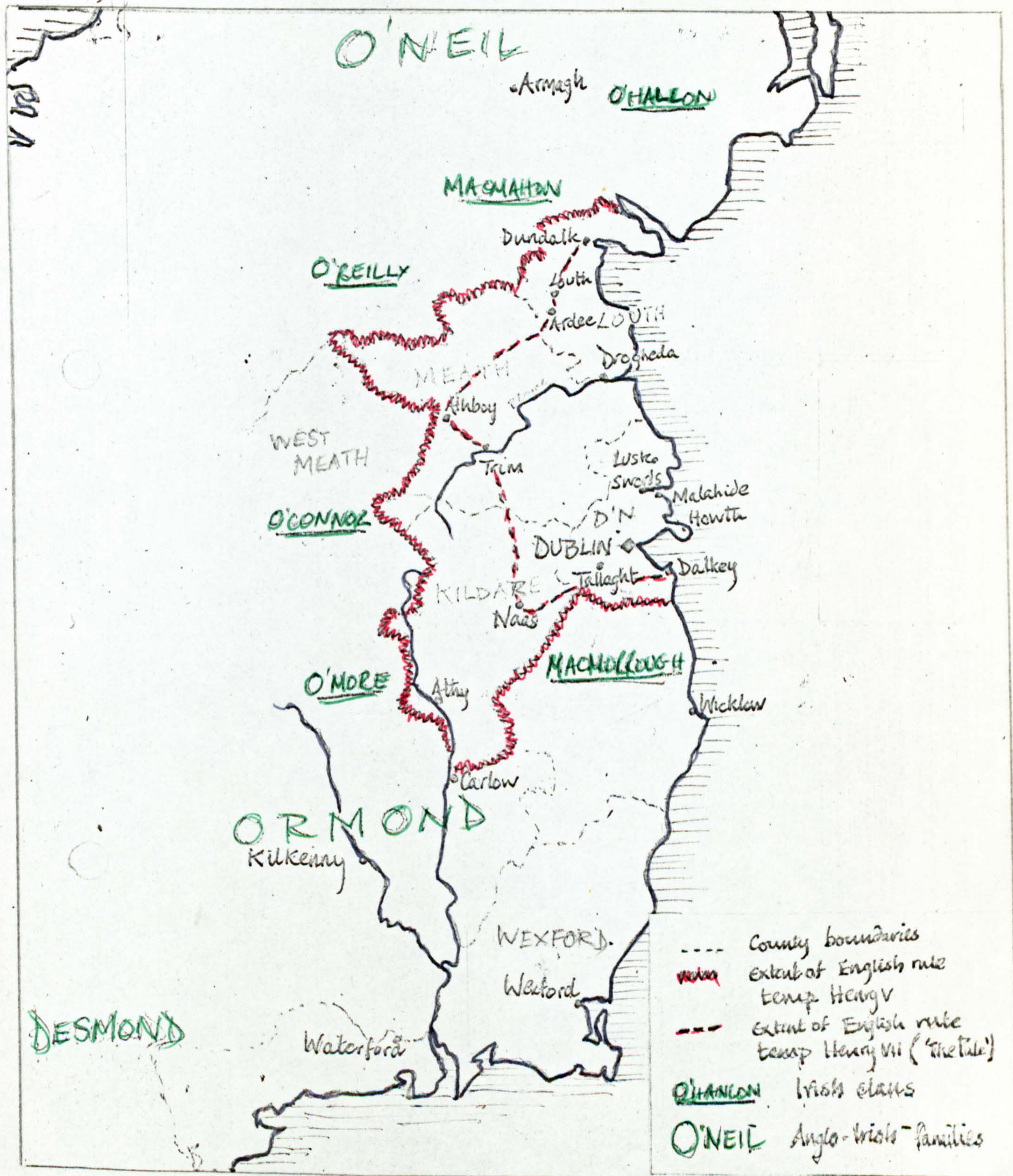
(2) Rot Pat Claus Hib, i, pp205, 208, 209, 434, 445. He was sworn into office by Archbishop Cranley of Dublin on 13 November (ibid, pp205-6).

(3) Ibid, pp212b, 215; CPR, 1416-22, pp151, 153.

(4) Little evidence has survived of his attempting any administrative reforms. In January 1415 Hugh Burgh did conduct an inquiry into the state of the Irish finances (Rot Pat Claus Hib, p208b).



Map III: Ireland in the fifteenth century





in which he campaigned from St. Patrick's Day to St. Michael's Day, was the most successful for English arms during the whole Lancastrian period. He did as much as he could on his slender resources. He brought the clans of O'More of Laoighis, MacMahon of Monaghan and O'Hallon of Ulster to their knees in a series of devastating and pitiless raids. Each chieftain was forced to give formal homage as well as serve under Talbot's banner against other clans. Both O'More and O'Hallon helped crush MacMahon. In an attempt to strengthen their submission he took hostages, including O'More's son. The result of Talbot's success was that the other border tribes made haste to render formal submission before they shared the same fate. By the end of 1415 the borders were pacified.

But Talbot clearly realised that an Irishman's word was not enough and he took steps to fortify the frontier against him. In the North he cleared a great stretch of forest which not only impressed the Irish but also eased the defence against their raids. In the South he repaired and fortified the vital bridge of Athy, with a result that the settlers there could enjoy a degree of security which they had not known for thirty years. In such a manner Talbot achieved a spectacular, if only short-lived, pacification of the tribes.<sup>(1)</sup> The tribes also appreciated

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(1) Ellis, Letters, i, pp53-64. Letter of a Great Council of Ireland, dated 26 June 1418, praising Talbot's action during 1415.



his success, for the compiler of the Annals of Ulster complained "From the time of Herod ther cam not anyone so wicked".<sup>(1)</sup>

In the spring of 1416, no doubt realising that he had not enough resources to carry on where he had left off in the autumn, he returned to England.<sup>(2)</sup> to plead with the King in person for more supplies. In late April he put his case before the council. He requested the payment of 1,000 marks of his allowance, disallowed to him by the Earl of Arundel, the late Treasurer, additional soldiers and supplies for the holding of the Irish marches, besides armed ships to patrol the sea against pirates. He was granted his allowance and one armed barge.<sup>(3)</sup> It was probably because of this short shrift that Talbot made no haste to return to Ireland. Indeed, he was encouraged to stay for a while, for he was summoned to Parliament and to the embassy detailed to meet the Emperor Sigismund at Dover.<sup>(4)</sup>

During his long absence the position in Ireland deteriorated. The O'Connors of Offaly and Art MacMurrough took the opportunity of renewing

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(1) E. Curtis, op cit, p292.

(2) Rot Pat Claus Hib, p212b. He sailed from Clondarf on 7 February leaving Archbishop Cranley as his deputy and Justiciar.

(3) Proc Priv Counc, vi, pp198-200.

(4) Ibid, p194.

their raids on the English.<sup>(1)</sup> At the same time, opposition to his government grew, and came to a head at a Parliament held at Trim in January 1417. Here he was indicted for various oppressions and debts and Archbishop Cranley took it upon himself to come to England and lay the Irish complaints before the King, overcoming Laurence Merbury's attempts to obstruct him. Cranley appeared before the Council on 25 February. The King virtually dismissed the charges, replying that he would make good their complaints after the expiration of Talbot's term of office.<sup>(2)</sup> Cranley never returned to Ireland, for he died on 25 May. Talbot now secured the appointment of his brother Richard to the vacant Archbishopric of Dublin. But it was not until the spring of 1418 that the brothers finally set off for Ireland.<sup>(3)</sup>

Talbot's second period of residence was beset with difficulties. The most fundamental of these was the overwhelming cost of his administration. His grant of 4,000 marks per annum had, in fact, been paid fairly regularly. In 1415 he received £2,336/3/4d. of his assignment,

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(1) J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, p66.

(2) Proc Priv Counc, pp219, 220; J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p310. Rot Pat Claus Hib, pp221-221b. Merbury refused to put his seal to the articles. Cranley, therefore, simply did without official authorisation.

(3) Richard Talbot was appointed on 20 December 1417. In November 1415 he had been granted the custody of the temporalities of the Bishopric of Ferns and in 1416 failed to win the Archbishopric of Armagh J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, pp68-9; Rot Pat Claus Hib, p212b).



and he received further instalments in May 1416, March 1417, March and April 1418 and throughout 1419. Nevertheless, in true Lancastrian fashion, he received consistently less than his original grant.<sup>(1)</sup> And he found the financial burden harder and harder to bear. Scarcely a month after his return he threatened to sail to France to plead with the King for money. A council begged him to stay, "considering the great destruction and disease which hath come into this lande by his laste absence" and wrote to the King on his behalf.<sup>(2)</sup> Talbot certainly was not satisfied. He wrote himself to the King, who gave him neither comfort nor relief. He, therefore, tried Bedford in England. Gone was the enthusiasm and vigour of the first year. Now he complained of the grand and importable charge that he bore. The Irish were once more in rebellion and his soldiers had mutinied and would not serve until they were paid and supplied.<sup>(3)</sup> In October he wrote again to Bedford with exactly the same complaint.<sup>(4)</sup> It would appear that he received little satisfaction from either the King or his Regent. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Markborough should comment that he left in 1419 "carrying along with him the curses of many because he, being runne much in debt for victuall and divers other

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(1) Proc Priv Counc, ii, p129; J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, p69.

(2) Ellis, Letters, i, pp53-64, particularly p55.

(3) BM, Cotton Mss, Titus B xi, 31.

(4) Ibid, No 46.

things, would pay little or nothing at all".<sup>(1)</sup>

Talbot was, moreover, hampered further by the rebellious opposition which he had aroused amongst some of the Anglo-Irish. The opposition which had been behind the attack on him in the Parliament of 1417 became more overt. Many had supported James Fitzgerald against the Lieutenant. James had usurped the Earldom of Desmond from his nephew Thomas. Thomas had come to Ireland with official English support to reclaim his title but had been captured by his uncle. In the summer of 1418 Talbot, with great expense, had managed to secure Thomas' release, but he failed to shake James' hold on the Earldom. Indeed, after Thomas died in 1420, the English government had no option but to recognise James as rightful Earl.<sup>(2)</sup> It was in the summer of 1418 that Thomas Butler, Prior of Kilmainham, the Earl of Kildare, Christopher Preston of Gormaston and others took up arms against Talbot. The Prior, in alliance with some of the Irish chieftains, retired to the counties of Tipperary and Kilkenny, which they occupied in force.<sup>(3)</sup> Kildare and Preston were arrested by Talbot at Slane before they could do much damage.<sup>(4)</sup> But

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(1) Chronicle of Ireland, p28.

(2) E. Curtis, op cit, pp294-5; J. T. Gilbert, op cit, pp307-8; Ellis, Letters, i, p61.

(3) BM, Cotton Mss, Titus Bxi, 46.

(4) E. Curtis, op cit, p292.



with this widespread opposition Talbot was in a far weaker position than he had been in 1415.

And yet despite this lack of resources, this opposition and his own weariness for the task, Talbot continued to enjoy success against the Irish. At Whitsun 1418 Maurice O'Keating came in to Lasenhale, County Dublin, where he yielded himself to the Lieutenant and swore homage to the King, releasing his English prisoners and giving his eldest son as a pledge. In the South, one Walter O'Burke had been harassing Limerick and Cork. At Michaelmas Talbot restored order in those parts, took O'Burke's homage and forced him to sign indentures to keep the peace. And on 10 May 1419 he captured Donogh MacMurrough, the young 'King of Leinster' who had foolishly repudiated his late father's oaths of allegiance.<sup>(1)</sup> But shortly after this feat King Henry summoned Talbot to France. So he sailed from Swords on 22 July, accompanied by his new prisoner, MacMurrough.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Ellis, Letters, i, pp59-60; EM, Cotton Mss, Titus B xi, 46; J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p311; E. Curtis, op cit, p293.

(2) CPR, 1422-9, p261; Rot Pat Claus Hib, p216; J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, op cit, p69. Henry V's method of dealing with the feud in Ireland seems to have been to have one party in his presence in France. In 1418 he called the Prior of Kilmainham, who sailed from Waterford in the autumn and joined his brother, James, Earl of Ormond, before Rouen. In 1419 the King decided to give in to the opposition. Consequently Talbot was called to France and Ormond was sent back to Ireland, being officially appointed in February 1420 when Talbot's indenture ran out.

Although Talbot made a deep impact on Ireland as a soldier in 1415, there was little left to show for his military efforts after 1419. He cannot really be blamed for the lack of resources which dictated the short term strategy and tactics which he followed. The most lasting consequence of his Lieutenancy was perhaps the feud with James of Ormond and in this context his most lasting achievement was the placing of his brother, Richard, as Archbishop of Dublin, for the Archbishop became the centre of a permanent Talbot faction.

It was this feud between the Talbots and Ormonds which dominated Irish politics between Talbot's two Lieutenancies. Its origins are obscure. In 1415 Talbot and Ormond worked, apparently, in happy co-operation. According to Dugdale, Ormond was retained by Talbot in 1414.<sup>(1)</sup> Certainly, in 1415 and early 1416 Ormond received generous grants from the Lieutenant.<sup>(2)</sup> It was not until Talbot's two year absence in England that the rift developed. The feud possibly began as a fundamental difference of political opinion during the years 1414 to 1417, but it was soon superceded by extreme personal enmity. Talbot, as an absentee lord, represented external royal authority in Ireland at its most negative. His policy was to concentrate on maintaining the

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(1) Dugdale, p329a. He was retained to serve for one year with his whole retinue.

(2) Rot Pat Claus Hib, pp208, 213b.



English 'ground' intact, enforcing strict segregation between Irish and English, and holding the border tribes in subjection by the sword. Ormond, on the other hand, as a residential lord, obviously found it far more desirable to reach an understanding with his Irish neighbours, and to avoid a rigid delineation of Irish from English. His policy of compromise was essential to his livelihood. It was perhaps the Lieutenant's attempt to restore Thomas Fitzgerald to the Earldom of Desmond which brought their differences of opinion to the fore.<sup>(1)</sup> It may be that Talbot's failure in this affair was due in large part to Ormond's influence against him, for in 1420 Ormond, as Lieutenant, promoted and liberally rewarded James Fitzgerald.<sup>(2)</sup>

But whatever the origins, by the time Talbot's Lieutenancy ended, the dispute had developed into the personal feud which was to be the most obvious of Ireland's troubles for the following twenty years. In 1427-8 Archbishop Swayne of Armagh wrote,

"Whan my Lord Talbot was in this contre ther was grete variouns betweyne hym and my lorde of Ormond, and ynt they be nought acordede, and some jentylnen of the contre ben well wylled to my lorde of Ormond they hold with hym and longen hym and helpyn hym, and be noght well willed to my lorde Talbot, nor to none that love hym, and they that love my lorde Talbot done in the same maner to my lorde of Ormond..... and so all this land is severed. And this debate betwyx these thwey lordes is cause of the gret harmes that be do in this contre".<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) See above p117.

(2) E. Curtis, op cit, pp294-5. J. T. Gilbert, op cit, pp307-8.

(3) J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p577.

Some of the particulars are known. In 1423, for instance, Talbot levelled various accusations against Ormond in the English Parliament. One of Ormond's major crimes was to be in alliance with various Irish chieftains, particularly William Thomisson, 'the strongest rebel and traitor of Ireland'. He was also held responsible for the murder of John Liverpole, Talbot's Constable of Wicklow and the arrest of Thomas Talbot, a cousin, who was handed over to the Irish who "beat him and laid hare bagges upon him more than he might bear, by the which cause the said Thomas was undone". The government, probably knowing that Talbot himself was not exactly the innocent party, ordered the accusations to be quashed and peace to be made between them.<sup>(1)</sup> That Talbot was not blameless is clear from a letter of c1420-2 written to him in France by his Constable of Athis, John Marshall. Athis was his 'own castle' in which he maintained his own soldiers, who at the time of writing (early January) had not been paid for five weeks. Marshall was reporting that one MacGilpatrick had been brought into Athis by MacFaghton and that he, MacGilpatrick, was willing to become Talbot's man. Indeed, both Irishmen were awaiting instructions on how to proceed in Talbot's service and so Talbot was asked to send his instructions to his council. MacFaghton also supplied the information that James of Ormond was making himself

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(1) Rot Parl, iv, pp198-9. The kinsmen did not, as Parliament hoped, make their peace.



strong against Talbot and was preparing to lay siege to any castles that he held, on account of which Marshall was somewhat uneasy.<sup>(1)</sup> Marshall's letter and the fact that in 1437-8 John Green commanded a detachment in Ireland, paid partly out of the profits of Sheffield,<sup>(2)</sup> provide clear evidence that Talbot maintained a private army in Ireland to help protect his interests. It is obvious, therefore, that Talbot dabbled as much in treason against Ormond as the Butlers had against him. He was, moreover, no less eager to find support amongst the Irish.

Perhaps Talbot's dealings with his prisoner Donogh MacMurrough should be seen in the same light. MacMurrough, King of Leinster, controlled the Wicklow mountains only a few miles south of Dublin and was one of the most powerful Irish chieftains. In 1419 Talbot had captured him and taken him to England, where he was imprisoned in the Tower. Sometime before 26 November 1424 MacMurrough was redelivered to Talbot who was then granted the profit and pleasure of his prisoner.<sup>(3)</sup> He apparently took him to Goodrich. At least, in July 1427, he was escorted by Thomas Everingham and four others from Goodrich via Blackmere to Chester, where he embarked for Ireland.<sup>(4)</sup> The terms of his release are

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(1) PRO, SC 1/43/176.

(2) THAS, ii, pp229-46.

(3) CPR, 1422-9, p261.

(4) BP 76/1427; 82/1426-7.

unknown, but it is conceivable that he entered some treaty of mutual help with his one-time captor. Certainly in October 1429 he was back in Blackmere enjoying Talbot's hospitality for a while.<sup>(1)</sup> Exactly what he might have done for Talbot in Ireland is uncertain, for, according to Archbishop Swayne, immediately on his return he took to the sword, raided County Kildare and then followed with two forays into Wexford.<sup>(2)</sup> Since Talbot claimed the lordship of Wexford, this was hardly the act of an ally. For lack of evidence the whole affair remains obscure, although some degree of collusion between the two may be suggested.

Of greater impact on the English administration than the attempts of both sides to build up support amongst the Irish was the intense political rivalry between the Talbots and Butlers. In 1419 Talbot had left his brother Richard as Justiciar and Laurence Merbury as Chancellor, besides Hugh Wyche, one of his supporters, in the office of second Baron of the Exchequer.<sup>(3)</sup> On Ormond's arrival as Lieutenant in 1420 Archbishop Talbot obviously surrendered the Justiciarship. Merbury now found himself under attack. In April 1421 he was condemned in a petition drawn up by Parliament attacking Talbot's administration.

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(1) BP 82/1429-30.

(2) J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p575.

(3) Rot Pat Claus Hib, p215b.



Before it came up for the Chancellor's authorisation, he took out letters of attorney and returned to England, apparently taking the great seal of Ireland with him as a last act of obstruction.<sup>(1)</sup> In April 1423 he was once more under attack for the taking of the seal and the malversation of Chancery funds.<sup>(2)</sup> By this time, however, Ormond had been relieved (on the death of Henry V his office automatically lapsed) and Archbishop Talbot was once again Justiciar. Unable to protect Merbury further, on 19 May he took over the office of Chancellor himself.<sup>(3)</sup> Merbury seems to have retired with a generous pension from Talbot.<sup>(4)</sup> Throughout the period, therefore, the Talbots managed to keep a firm foothold in the government.

Henry VI's council of minority appointed as its first Lieutenant of Ireland Edmund, Earl of March, on 9 May 1423. In this appointment one can perhaps trace an attempt by the council to find an answer to the

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(1) Rot Pat Claus Hib, pp221-221b, 218b, 220, 225b.

(2) Ibid.

(3) H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, The Irish Parliament in the Middle Ages, pp311-2. Talbot became Justiciar on 4 October 1422. The office technically lapsed on March's appointment (9 May) but March's deputy, Dauntsey, Bishop of Meath, was not appointed until 4 August. Talbot did his utmost to obstruct Meath taking over his office.

(4) £40 per annum. BM, Ad Ch 73948.

Irish problems for, as Earl of Ulster, March was the most powerful of the Anglo-Irish lords and in name the most likely to impress the Irish. And his high birth and position held out the hope that he might be able to settle the Talbot-Butler quarrel. Unfortunately, March did not hold aloof. Not only did he keep Archbishop Talbot on as his Chancellor, but in 1424 he retained Lord Talbot to serve with him in Ireland.<sup>(1)</sup> March's administration was, from the very first, a Talbot victory in disguise.

March died of the plague in January 1425 before he had had time to achieve much. Lord Talbot was immediately made Justiciar<sup>(2)</sup> and he continued, where March had left off, in taking the homage of several Irish chieftains. Five weeks later, however, Ormond was once again appointed full Lieutenant. When the homages had been taken, Talbot returned to England via Wexford.<sup>(3)</sup> He was not to come to Ireland again for over twenty years. In his absence the leadership of his party and the opposition to Ormond once more fell on the shoulders of the Archbishop of Dublin.

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(1) CPR, 1422-9, p332.

(2) On 22 January Talbot agreed to be Justiciar and retained one hundred archers to serve him in that capacity (Rot Pat Claus Hib, p239).

(3) Ormond was appointed on 1 March 1425 but did not arrive until later. On 27 March Talbot received the homage of Kevan O'Connor at Trim and on 10 April that of Donat O'Brian at Dublin. He was in Wexford on 26 May (ibid, pp236, 237, 238b). He was at Blackmere in August and September (BP 85/1424-5).



Richard Talbot seems to have been as ruthless as his elder brother. He proved himself to be a crafty and tenacious politician. For he was first and foremost a politician, in addition a soldier, and only secondly a churchman. Between 1427 and 1442, when Ireland was governed by insignificant Lieutenants, he was the most powerful resident politician.<sup>(1)</sup> As Archbishop of Dublin he automatically had a seat in the Lieutenant's council. Even when his influence was eclipsed, as in the years 1442-4, he could not be excluded.<sup>(2)</sup> And during the Lieutenant's absences, which were long and frequent, he, more often than anyone else, took over the government as Justiciar. He held this office not only in 1419-20 and 1422-3 but also in 1429-31, 1436-9, 1444-6 and 1447-9. He all but became the regular deputy-lieutenant.<sup>(3)</sup> And, moreover, from the time of his first appointment in 1422 he did his best to keep the office of Chancellor in his own hands. In 1425 he was forced to surrender the

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- (1) The Lieutenants were John, Lord Grey of Codnor (1427-8), Sir John Sutton, Lord Dudley (1428-31), Sir Thomas Stanley (1431-8) and Lionel, Lord Welles (1438-42). Although resident for most of the time, Talbot did visit England occasionally, as at Easter 1421 and December-January 1433-4, where he no doubt consulted with his brother's council (BP 75/1420-1, 1433-4).
- (2) See discussion below pp129-33.
- (3) J. D'Alton, The Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin, pp153-7. When others were appointed to this office he did his best to undermine their position, eg Bishop Dauntsey of Meath in 1423 and Ormond in 1441.

office, but in 1428 he regained it only to be removed again in 1431. For the next ten or eleven years he repeatedly attempted to recover the office, not hesitating to use his own privy seal to authorise forged letters of appointment. His schemes culminated in a head-on clash with Ormond in 1442.<sup>(1)</sup>

Just as a Lieutenant, he excited alternately the praise and approbation of the Irish councils and parliaments. In 1430 the permanent council sent a rather excessive eulogy to England, referring to "the labour and resistance that the said Justice can and doth make against the enemies and rebels more than any other Lieutenant or other governor did in their time before this". But in the following year he was summoned to appear before the King and council in England to answer for his conduct following a complaint from the King's faithful lieges. And in 1442 Ormond secured in the permanent council, the Archbishop being present, the enrolment of memoranda reciting his various crimes and extortions.<sup>(2)</sup>

It would appear that he was most active for the common weal as a soldier. In the winter of 1421-22 he was engaged 'in distant parts' against the Irish with a personal retinue of seventy-two men. In 1427

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(1) Ibid; J. Graves, op cit, pp295-303.

(2) Harris, Collectanea, iv, p314; J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p328; J. Graves, op cit, pp301-3.



he had to raise soldiers for the defence of the Irish marches and in 1445-6 he called out the inhabitants of his province to repel an invasion by a 'great multitude' of wild Irish.<sup>(1)</sup>

Archbishop Talbot clearly had nothing spiritual to offer to the Irish Church. On the practical side, he reformed the prebendary canons of St. Patrick's, Dublin, and established two chantries, one in St. Michael's Church and one in St. Andrew's, which he endowed with 100 marks per annum.<sup>(2)</sup> The Archbishopric's main significance to him, however, was as a source from which he could maintain the quarrel against the Butlers. In 1451 it was revealed that two or almost three parts of the fruits of the archiepiscopal seat were alienated by him, both by his negligence and by the raids of the Irish into its lands. In 1460 he was condemned as having made outrageous and immeasurable alienations and donations. Clondallein Mill and Balgaddy, for instance, had been granted to his cousin Nicholas Talbot and Tallaght to his partisan, Thomas Walshe.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) PRO, E 101/248/10; J. D'Alton, op cit, p154; Cal Pap Reg, x, pp341-2.

(2) J. D'Alton, op cit, p156; Cal Pap Reg, ix, p116. He also maintained a quarrel for precedence with the Metropolitan of Armagh. Archbishop Swayne, who was an Ormondist, refused to attend a parliament in 1429 because of this. On Swayne's death in 1443 Ormond tried to transfer Talbot, but he refused.

(3) Cal Pap Reg, c, p99; H. F. Berry, Statute rolls of the Parliament of Ireland, ii, p771.

Part of the profits of the province clearly went into maintaining a band of armed adherents. In 1431 he was called before the King and council in England to answer for their tumultuous and oppressive proceedings. At the same time, he was ordered to liberate John Butler, brother of the Earl of Ormond, whom he had captured and imprisoned.<sup>(1)</sup> And his sole contribution to the literature of the fifteenth century was a polemic entitled "De abusu regiminis Jacobus comitis Ormond dum esset locumteniens Hiberniae".<sup>(2)</sup> In short, the quarrel with the Butlers was Talbot's one preoccupation.

In the absence of the two great participants, therefore, Archbishop Talbot ensured that the quarrel with the Butlers was kept alive and when Ormond returned in 1441 the political enmity flared into crisis once again. Ormond's appointment as deputy to Lord Welles in 1441 was the first crucial threat to Archbishop Talbot's pre-eminence since 1427. It inaugurated a three year period of fierce competition, out of which the Talbots finally emerged victorious.<sup>(3)</sup> In 1441 they clearly feared that Ormond would soon be made full Lieutenant. In an attempt to fore-

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(1) J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p328.

(2) J. D'Alton, op cit, p157.

(3) There is a surprising number of documents relating to this period to be found printed in J. Graves, op cit, pp276-313; Proc Priv Counc, v, pp317-33; Calendar of Ormond Deeds, iii, pp140-59. What follows is a summary of the contents of these.



stall this, Richard Talbot and his supporter, Richard Wogan, then Chancellor, induced a parliament in November to draw up articles denouncing their rival and then armed with these the two hurried to England to lay their case before the council.<sup>(1)</sup> But their ploy backfired. On 22 February Ormond was made full Lieutenant and the Archbishop received a severe rap for trying to usurp the power of the King to nominate his own officers.<sup>(2)</sup> Moreover, the articles were handed to Ormond for himself to judge. Accordingly, in an Irish council in June, both Talbot and Wogan being present, each article was formally denied, denounced and quashed.<sup>(3)</sup> Wogan bravely stood out against this action by sending a letter of complaint to England. But, in fear of retribution, he

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- (1) Proc Priv Counc, pp317-20. Ormond was said to be too old and too 'unlusty', was accused of ruling through his affinity and was generally claimed to be unsuitable because the Talbots and others had complained before! When pressed, Wogan declared that Ormond was "truly a grete grown man of Flesh". The council nevertheless found that there was no other man within Ireland so mighty and able (CP, x, p126 n(a) ).
- (2) Analecta Hibernica, i, p215; Proc Priv Counc, v, pp184-5. Letter of council to Chancellor of Ireland written on 24 March confirming Ormond's appointment and stating that the appointment of the Lieutenant was no concern of the Irish parliament. Nicolas for some reason believed this was in answer to another unknown petition.
- (3) J. Graves, op cit, pp276-84. The council met on 5 June at Trim.

quickly fled to England himself.<sup>(1)</sup> His office was thus left vacant and Talbot, continuing the struggle, tried in October and November 1441 to push himself into his place. But on his failure to produce official letters of appointment, Ormond and his council were able to thwart him.<sup>(2)</sup> At this point he was forced to concede defeat.

The English council had also, belatedly, woken up to the situation and attempted to call the two rivals to account. Giles Thorndon, the Treasurer, was summoned to England to give an impartial statement of affairs. He confirmed that the chief cause of trouble in Ireland was the long-standing feud. On 28 August 1442 it was decided in the English council to call both parties to England before 2 February 1443. This was later postponed until Easter.<sup>(3)</sup> But both ignored the summonses and perforce the council's attempts petered out.

- (1) J. Graves, op cit, pp285-7, 288. Wogan claimed he was specially charged to report on Ormond's activities. His letter, written on 14 June, stated that Robert Dyke, the keeper of Chancery Rolls, had been forced by conciliar majority to seal them. He also added that Ormond packed the parliament he had recently called and concluded that he could not bear Ormond's heavy lordship.
- (2) Ibid, pp295-300. Talbot originally claimed the office of 19 October. On 21 November Ormond made public his reasons for refusing Talbot and added his own accusation of treason (ibid, pp300-3).
- (3) Proc Priv Counc, pp206, 248, 250, 321-4. Thorndon was summoned on 24 August. He blamed the greater party for general subversion of impartial law and further attested to the continuing bankruptcy of all the Irish offices.



Throughout 1443 Ormond appeared to have secured his position. But he succeeded in alienating further opposition which eventually led to his recall. Since 1441 he had been at daggers drawn with Thomas Fitzgerald, Prior of Kilmainham,<sup>(1)</sup> and had imprisoned him in Dublin castle. But Fitzgerald's gaoler was none other than Giles Thorndon, Constable of the castle as well as Treasurer.

Thorndon now joined the opposition and released his prisoner, who took ship for England. On 30 March 1444 Thorndon himself was condemned by the council for plotting against the Lieutenant and was removed from office. He too fled the country and at Easter added his own indictment of Ormond to those being collected by the English council.<sup>(2)</sup> Concurrently,

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- (1) Fitzgerald had apparently attacked William, brother of Lionel, Lord Welles; for this he had been imprisoned by Ormond. For further details of the quarrel see J. Graves, op cit, pp303-4.
- (2) Calendar of Ormond Deeds, iii, pp140-5; Proc Priv Counc, pp327-34. Thorndon does not seem to have been in alliance with the Talbots. At a council called on 21 June 1444 he was accused of telling Talbot that he would cut off Ormond's head and send it to the King in a napkin but, later, when Shrewsbury was made Lieutenant, he was not restored to his office and lands, nor given any other reward. (Calendar of Ormond Deeds, iii, p152). He must have had his own quarrel with Ormond. In his indictment he accused Ormond of taking a valuable wardship from him, dismissing him wrongfully from office and several other extortions and crimes, including drawing false tallies from the exchequer during his absence. Ormond claimed that he had dismissed Thorndon after he had released Fitzgerald and added a general charge of treason.

the Prior of Kilmainham formally challenged Ormond to a duel.<sup>(1)</sup> This finally appears to have discredited Ormond's government for he was now ordered home. In June, before he sailed, he called a great council at Drogheda. In this assembly, no doubt well packed, he received a massive vote of confidence, articles eulogising his own deeds being drawn up.<sup>(2)</sup> Armed with these he returned to face his accusers.<sup>(3)</sup>

Ormond was subsequently dismissed and on 12 March 1445 John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, was re-appointed in his place. Talbot's first act was to make his brother Richard Justiciar. But he was in no hurry to go to Ireland himself. He did not arrive until the autumn of 1446 and even then stayed in the country barely a year.<sup>(4)</sup> He had little interest

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(1) J. T. Gilbert, op cit, p346.

(2) J. Graves, op cit, pp304-11. It is interesting that Richard Talbot and, moreover, Richard Wogan were present at these councils held in 1444. Ormond was powerful enough to override them in council and did not have to exclude them.

(3) The duel caused a great sensation. Ormond was lodged in the Tower under the Duke of Exeter. Fitzgerald was placed in Thorndon's custody. He received instructions on how to fight from one Philip Treherne, a fishmonger. At the last minute the King forbade the duel. Ormond was acquitted and Fitzgerald was removed from office shortly after by the Vicar-General of the Knights of St. John (J. T. Gilbert, op cit, pp347-8; Gregory's Chronicle, p187).

(4) CPR, 1441-6, p345, 1446-52, p1. Letters of protection for the Earl and his son 'going to Ireland' were issued on 1 September. On 8 September Sir John Talbot was at Sheffield where he drew up his will "proponens iter facere versus partes Hiberniae" (Testamenta Eboracensia, (Surtees Society, xxx) p253).



left in its affairs. Probably one reason was that in the last two years his quarrel with Ormond had at long last been settled. Certainly nothing more is heard of their differences after 1444. Indeed, sometime before March 1445 Talbot's heir, Sir John Talbot, had married Ormond's daughter Elizabeth.<sup>(1)</sup> And even before this there is evidence of association between Talbot's and Ormond's sons. In the year 1443 Sir Christopher Talbot and Sir James Ormond visited Shrewsbury together. In later years the relationship between Sir John Talbot and Sir James Ormond developed into a firm friendship and political alliance.<sup>(2)</sup> Whether or not the younger generation brought the elder together is a matter of conjecture. So also is the possible part played by Richard of York, for in or before 1445-6 he had retained Sir James Ormond with a fee of £15/6/8d. and later in July 1450 retained the Earl of Ormond himself to serve him in England and Ireland.<sup>(3)</sup> With both Talbots and Butlers receiving York's fee an atmosphere of concession might have been created.

Talbot's Lieutenancy of 1446-7 is very poorly documented. It is known that he appointed his own son, Sir John Talbot, his Chancellor

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(1) CP, xi, p705.

(2) HMC, Shrewsbury Corporation Mss, p28.

(3) J. T. Rosenthal, 'The Estates and Finances of Richard, Duke of York', Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, ii, p190; CP, x, p124. Sir James had also served in France under York in 1441 and took part with Shrewsbury in the homecoming of Queen Margaret in 1445.

and he accompanied him in 1446. In place of Giles Thorndon, two courtiers, Edmund Hampden and John Wenlock, were appointed Treasurer and Constable of the castle.<sup>(1)</sup> Soon after his arrival Talbot took to the field and cleared the marches of Kildare, but by 30 November he had retired to Naas.<sup>(2)</sup> One month later a parliament met at Trim. At this assembly statutes were passed confirming and appointing various officials, orders were sent out for various 'traitors' to appear before the Lieutenant at Trim before 2 February and measures were taken for protection against the Irish, including the bizarre 'Statute of Shaving', under which all liegemen were forbidden to wear moustaches.<sup>(3)</sup> Little else of the tour of duty is known. Sometime during the following summer he sailed to England, leaving his brother Richard as Justiciar again. He never returned, for in December he was replaced by Richard of York. Before York arrived Richard Talbot died (15 August 1449), and with his death the period of Talbot participation in Irish affairs came to an end.

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- (1) CPR, 1441-6, pp455, 457. John Wenlock and Edmund Hampden were appointed to the lands and offices held by Giles Thorndon.
- (2) THAS, ii, p356 ff. Information sent from Ireland by Roger Stedman in a letter to the Receiver of Sheffield and subsequently sewn to the account for 1446-7.
- (3) H. F. Berry, Statute Rolls of the Parliament of Ireland, ii, pp55-109. See cl. xx (p89) for statute on shaving. Anyone found with more than two weeks growth was to be classified as a rebel. Its effect is not known. On a more practical level he had troops under William Welles and Sir Richard Nugent defending Meath and offered special licences for men to build their own castles on the marches (ibid, pp77, 107).



Messrs. Richardson and Sayles argue that historians have exaggerated the feebleness of government in Ireland and the disorders of the fifteenth century. Of the Butler and Talbot feud they have commented that "the personal animosity of Ormond and John Talbot was the expression, rather than the cause, of the spirit of strife, the mal du siècle, that afflicted so many lands and so many great men. The merits of the protagonists were greater than their faults".<sup>(1)</sup> If this means that the feud was but one expression of the deterioration of the Lancastrian government of Ireland, one can only agree. And one can understand why, with all its other problems, the government of Henry VI paid only scant attention to the comparatively minor problem of Ireland. But surely the disputes were of the making of the protagonists and, in the special context of Ireland, hardly excusable. For at a time when a concerted effort by the Anglo-Irish was vital, they showed a fine disregard for the real interests of their King. It is hard to attribute particular merit to either party. The "mal du siècle" was not the spirit of strife but the weakness of royal government. In Ireland it was non-existent. The period of Irish history in which Talbot played a part demonstrates more clearly than ever in England the chaos brought to medieval society by the subject too mighty for the Crown to control.

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(1) H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, The Irish Parliament in the Middle Ages, pp162, 171.

## V

THE CAREER OF JOHN, FIRST EARL OF SHREWSBURY  
IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE, 1419-1453

Something of a legend gathered around the name of John Talbot, even in his own lifetime. According to Edward Hall, "his name and fame was spitefull and dreadfull to the common people; in so much that women in Fraunce to feare their yonge childre, would crye, the Talbot cometh, the Talbot cometh".<sup>(1)</sup> In Bordeaux he became known as 'le roi Talbot' and one of the few contemporary English comments, that of the chronicler Pigott in 1451, was that he was "fierce in fight and most dred of all other in France in war".<sup>(2)</sup> The manner of his death at the head of the last medieval English army to fight the French only added to this legend; sixteenth century historians willingly embellished it. "Talbot", wrote Polydore Vergil, some fifty years after his death, "was a man amongst men, of reputation in deed, esteemed both for nobilitie of birth and haughtiness of courage, of most honourable and high renowne, who was conqueror in so many sundry conflictes, that both his name was redowted above all others through France and yet contineweth of famous memory

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(1) Hall, p250; H. Ribadieu, La Conquête de la Guyenne, p323. Apparently the expression "il est comme le roi Talbot" was still used in nineteenth century Medoc, as in Castillon was the custom of frightening naughty children with the name of Talbot (W. H. Egerton, 'Talbot's Tomb', TSAS, viii, p418).

(2) C. L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature, p372.



universally at this day".<sup>(1)</sup> He became the 'English Achilles' and Shakespeare, in Henry VI, Part I, made him, 'Old Talbot', the great hero of the reign, fit to rank with Henry V. Although recent historians have been at pains to point out that "he lacked the genius which makes an outstanding general", citing his defeat in two major battles,<sup>(2)</sup> the legend still survives. A. H. Burne turned his military history, The Agincourt War, into a thinly disguised eulogy of the deeds of John Talbot, raising him even above Henry V, whilst the image of old Talbot's tragic and chivalric death at Castillon still enthalls A. L. Rowse.<sup>(3)</sup>

Did the man bear any resemblance to the legend? This can only be answered by an account of his public career after 1419 and an assessment of his service, both military and political, to Henry VI. Certain periods of his life, the Orleans campaign and Castillon, have received ample attention already from historians. It is the less spectacular years of his career that need closer study and show most clearly the nature of his qualities and services to the Crown, which lied behind his reputation.

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(1) Three books of Polydore Vergil's English History, p15.

(2) E. Carleton-Williams, My Lord of Bedford, p148, and also J. A. Tait's article in DNB, lx.

(3) Bosworth Field and the Wars of the Roses, p126.

## (i)

Talbot first served in France as a mere captain in the host of Henry V. He received the King's summons to Normandy whilst still Lieutenant of Ireland and, as far as the limited sources show, sailed there in or before the spring of 1420, for he was in the King's company by May of that year,<sup>(1)</sup> and there remained, more or less permanently until the summer of 1422. It may be assumed, therefore, that he was present at the Treaty of Troyes and at Henry's marriage in Paris in June. He certainly served throughout the siege of Melun (July-November) and was probably a member of the King's entourage that returned in triumph to England, via Paris and Rouen, in the winter of 1420-1, for he was one of the lords appointed to order the service of the feast at Queen Katherine's coronation on 23 February 1421.<sup>(2)</sup> After the coronation celebrations he accompanied the King on his tour of England, being with him on 4 March 1421 at Shrewsbury when the captors of Sir John Oldcastle were rewarded. He evidently left the court in his native county, for he was at Wattlesborough, the home of his retainer Hugh Burgh, six weeks later.<sup>(3)</sup> Nevertheless he was retained once more by the King on 1 May and was soon preparing for his return to France. His retinue was mustered

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(1) Talbot received the summons in 1419 and left Ireland in July. He was not apparently in France in September but was mustered there in May 1420. (CPR, 1422-9, p261; CNR, p373).

(2) Gesta Henrici Quinti, p144; Hall, p103; Fabyan, p586.

(3) CCR, 1419-22, p196.



at Sandwich on 11 June and sailed a few days later.<sup>(1)</sup> This second visit was taken up largely by the siege of Meaux (November 1421-May 1422). He apparently escaped the disease which killed the King, although by April he had lost 24 of his 66 archers.<sup>(2)</sup> It was probably news of his wife's death (31 May) that called him home soon after the end of the siege.<sup>(3)</sup> He was thus in England, attending to private affairs, when news of Henry's death arrived. It was perhaps significant to his later career that he had shared in the glory of Henry's reign.

For Talbot, the first four years of Henry VI's reign were dominated by private affairs. In February 1422 he succeeded officially to his family inheritance and was for a time occupied with his entry into the new lands, which involved him in a feud with John Abrahall in Herefordshire.<sup>(4)</sup> The death of his first wife also opened the way for an alliance with the Beauchamp family. He had seen service in France with Richard, Earl of Warwick, and within two years of Maud's death he married the Earl's eldest daughter, Margaret. This was an illustrious

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(1) PRO, E101/70/5/706; 101/50/1.

(2) PRO, E101/10/110, 116, 15/111, 114.

(3) Rot Pat Claus Hib, p225. For the full account of these years see J. H. Wylie and W. T. Waugh, The Reign of Henry V, iii,

(4) See above p29.

match, for at the time she was joint-heiress to both her father's and mother's vast estates.<sup>(1)</sup> Talbot became closely involved in his new father-in-law's affairs. When Warwick went to France in 1426 he was one of the councillors, with Robert Andrew and John Throckmorton, responsible for the exchange of indentures, after the Earl had fulfilled his contract, with the Keeper of the Privy Seal.<sup>(2)</sup> He and some of his followers were already involved on Warwick's behalf in his feud with Joan, Lady of Abergavenny. His brother William was killed by a band of Joan's servants before 17 January 1426 and, although the parties agreed to accept the award of John, Duke of Bedford before 2 February 1427, Joan later complained that Talbot's half brother-in-law, Sir Hugh Cokesey, and others had sacked her manor of Snitterfield.<sup>(3)</sup>

This was a somewhat stormy time of his career, for in addition to taking up his father-in-law's quarrel and his own feud with Abrahall he was also feuding with Ormond in Ireland, with one Hugh Wenlock, and with Grey of Ruthin over parliamentary precedence.<sup>(4)</sup> His violent

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(1) See above p37.

(2) CCR, 1422-9, p277.

(3) CCR, 1422-9, pp317-8; CPR, 1422-9, p423. On 14 November 1426 the rival parties put up recognisances of £1,000 and agreed to abide by Bedford's award.

(4) The Ormond feud reached a height of particular bitterness in 1423. For details see above p121. For the Wenlock dispute see Rot Parl, iv, p275a and the quarrel with Grey, ibid, p312a.



behaviour may not have commended him to the King's council for, having attended the council meetings of September-November 1422 which arranged for the government of the realm under the restricted Protectorship of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, he did not find a place on the permanent council and retired to the background of affairs.<sup>(1)</sup> On 30 October he was appointed to head a new Commission to maintain order in the Welsh Marches and also placed on the bench in no less than ten counties.<sup>(2)</sup> He was not called upon by the council again until early 1424 when he was commissioned with the Lords Clinton and Poynings to lead a force for the relief of Le Crotoy. On 14 February orders were issued for their troops to be mustered at Winchelsea, but in the event they were not needed, for on 3 March Sir Ralph Butler succeeded in recovering the place from France. Consequently, it would appear, the force never set sail.<sup>(3)</sup>

It has been stated that Talbot fought at the battle of Verneuil later in the summer of 1424, but this cannot have been so. Of those

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(1) He was present at the council held at Windsor on 28 September 1422 when the Bishop of Durham surrendered the Great Seal and on 5 November he was again present at Westminster as one of the lords who supported the concept of the supremacy of council (Rot Parl, iv, p198; Proc Priv Counc, iii, p6).

(2) CP, xi, p700.

(3) CPR, 1422-9, p193; Devon, Issues, p391; Monstrelet, i, p508.

barons who gathered at Winchelsea in February only Poynings is known to have gone to France in 1424, in June, and there is no doubt that he fought in the battle. But there is not one contemporary record of Talbot's presence in France or at Verneuil.<sup>(1)</sup> There seems no reason to doubt that he was still in England, preoccupied firstly with his marriage to Margaret Beauchamp and secondly with preparations for his return to Ireland in the company of Edmund, Earl of March. He was retained by March at Denbigh on Trinity Sunday (18 June) and on 1 September was described as being about to go to Ireland when he nominated his English attorneys. He also stayed for a short time at Blackmere in October, presumably while on his journey.<sup>(2)</sup> March's death in the following January cut short Talbot's stay in Ireland and, having been summoned to Parliament on 24 February, he came back to England, although he did not sail from Wexford until after 26 May (Parliament had met on 30 April).<sup>(3)</sup>

Nothing is known of his activities during the summer of 1425, except

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- (1) Both the articles in the DNB and CP state that Talbot fought at Verneuil. None of the eye-witness accounts nor the list printed by Stevenson includes him amongst the English combatants. Basin, writing fifty years later is the only French source, in fact, to include him. For Poynings see Wars of the English, ii, p394. On 6 May Talbot was nominated to a vacant stall of the Order of the Garter (CP, xi, p700).
- (2) CPR, 1422-9, pp263, 332; BP 76/1424-5. For details of Talbot's second stay in Ireland see above p125.
- (3) Rot Pat Claus Hib, p238b.



that he was a visitor to Blackmere again in August and September.<sup>(1)</sup> But Bedford's return to England at the end of the year brought him more to the fore. In the period of January-March 1426 he worked for Bedford in securing a reconciliation between Gloucester and Beaufort and attended the Parliament that met at Leicester on 18 February.<sup>(2)</sup> As one of Bedford's men he occasionally attended council meetings during the year and Bedford became the godfather of his eldest son by Margaret Beauchamp, born that same year.<sup>(3)</sup> In the autumn Warwick returned to France and it was decided that Talbot should accompany Bedford, when he sailed back in the spring. Musters of Bedford's force of 1,200 men, which included retinues under Lords Camoys, Clinton and Roos in addition to Talbot, were taken at Sandwich on 5 March. It sailed to Calais on 19 March 1427.<sup>(4)</sup> It was the beginning of eighteen years almost constant residence in France in which Talbot was to make his reputation as a soldier.

It is well to recall that in 1427 Talbot, then turning forty, had had only two years experience in France and was still virtually unknown to his enemies. The fact that in the next two years he rapidly became

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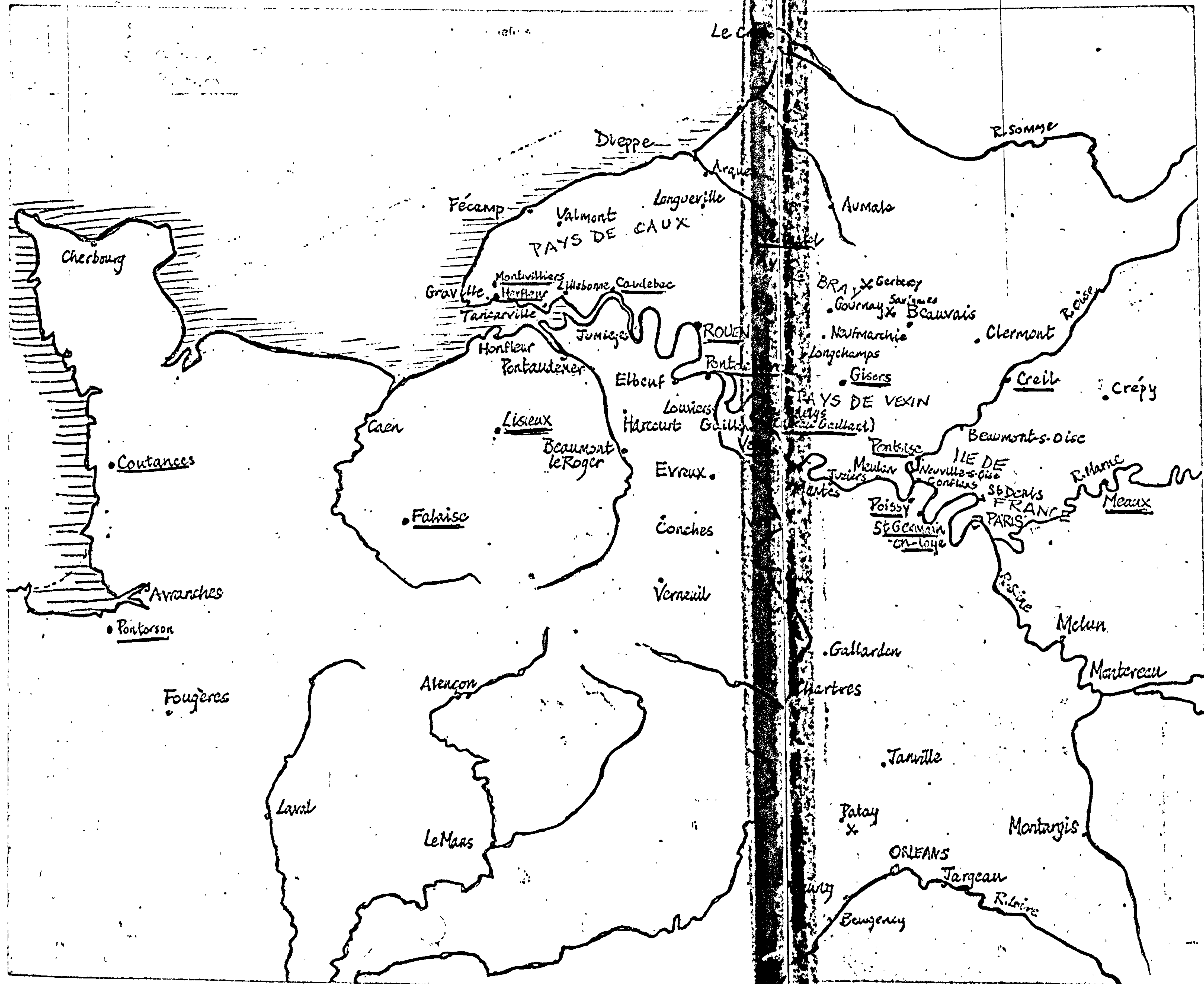
(1) BP 85/1424-5.

(2) Proc Priv Counc, iii, pp181-7.

(3) CPR, 1422-9, pp351, 354. Also in this year, on 19 May, his eldest son by Maud Nevill, John, was knighted by the King with other young lords.

(4) CPR, 1422-9, p404; Ramsay, i, p371; E. Carleton-Williams, My Lord of Bedford, p147.

Map IV: Northern France in the fifteenth century



underlinings in red indicate places of which Talbot was Captain.



respected and feared by the French was due as much to Bedford's patronage as to his own skills, although he soon justified Bedford's faith in him by the vigour and ruthlessness which were to be the stamp of his generalship throughout the war.

Immediately on landing Talbot, with Roos, was sent to join Warwick besieging Pontorson on the marches of Brittany. Their arrival helped to achieve the surrender of that place on 8 May, and they were made temporary joint Captains.<sup>(1)</sup> But shortly, still in Warwick's company, they were called back across Normandy to lay siege to Montargis, the main objective of Bedford's summer offensive. In this they failed. On 5 September the English were chased away by Dunois and La Hire.<sup>(2)</sup> The French also made progress in Maine during the autumn and after the setback at Montargis Warwick and Talbot were sent to disturb them. The French refused the challenge of a pitched battle and so Talbot was left in command of the area; his first general command. According to Hall, whose account it has been suggested was based on a contemporary English description, Talbot was made full Governor of Anjou and Maine in succession to Sir John Fastolf, who had recently failed to stop the enemy.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) E. Cosneau, Le Connétable Richemont, p137.

(2) Ibid, pp145-8.

(3) Hall, p141. B. J. H. Rowe, 'A contemporary account of the Hundred Years War', EHR, xii (1926), pp504-13, draws attention to details in Hall, not to be found elsewhere, for the years 1415-29, which were taken from a private history written for Sir John Fastolf. Hall's account for these years hence has the value of a contemporary chronicle.

He based himself on Alençon and set about recovering some of the lost ground. In March 1428 he raided Maine and in Hall's words, "slewe men and destroyed castles and brent townes and in conclusion suddenly took the towne of Laval". In May Le Mans was surprised by La Hire but Talbot rushed to the rescue and chased out the French in a dramatic dawn assault.<sup>(1)</sup> In these engagements he made his first mark on the war.

In the summer of 1428 Talbot was called back to Paris by Bedford, where he joined Thomas, Earl of Salisbury, who had recently arrived from England with strong reinforcements. At a council of war held in June it was decided to make a final drive for Angers and the complete subjection of Anjou. In July the army set off, but by then the destination had been changed to Orleans. It is to be assumed that Talbot was in Salisbury's company on the triumphal march to the Loire which culminated in the capture of Beaugency on 25 September.<sup>(2)</sup> It does not appear, however, that he was in the army that laid siege to Orleans in October. He perhaps stayed back in reserve for, after Salisbury's death and the temporary suspension of operations, he was in Chartres with Bedford. But on 26 November he and Lord Scales were ordered to Meung where they joined the army under Suffolk preparing to renew the

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(1) Hall, p141. At this time Talbot was also Captain of Coutances and Falaise (BN, Ms Fr 26050/918; PO 2787, Talbot section 4). On 14 April he was said to be at Alençon (BM, Ad Ch 519).

(2) Waurin, 1422-31, pp240-1.



siege.<sup>(1)</sup> By 1 December the army under the joint command of the three was encamped before Orleans.<sup>(2)</sup>

The story of the siege, which was abandoned on 8 May 1429, need not be repeated.<sup>(3)</sup> For the failure Talbot must take his share of the blame. He was also no doubt in full agreement with the decision to divide the army after the raising of the siege, a decision which was partly the consequence of the triple command.<sup>(4)</sup> One must be wary of being too critical of the decision to hold the line of the Loire, because of the benefit of hindsight. In the event it proved fatal, but the French had no reputation for following up their successes with vigour, and even without Orleans the three bridgeheads of Beaugency, Jargeau and Meung were still of great value.

For a month the strategy of holding the Loire at these three points

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(1) BN, Ms Fr 26050/997-8; BM, Ad Ch 1434.

(2) A full muster of the combined army was taken on 2/3 December.

(3) This has been the subject of many works, English and French. The account in Beaucourt, ii, is based firmly on narrative and administrative records, whilst Burne gives a very detailed reconstruction of the purely military aspect.

(4) Burne, particularly, does his utmost to exculpate Talbot, shifting the blame to the unfortunate Suffolk.

seemed perfectly sound. But the English commanders had reckoned without the new spirit imparted by Jeanne D'Arc. On 12 June Jargeau fell and Suffolk was captured, whilst Talbot marched back to Janville to meet reinforcements under Sir John Fastolf (16 June). Waurin, who was with the reinforcements, reported the heated argument over strategy that ensued; Fastolf wished to abandon the Loire and retire to a more northerly front, but Talbot was still determined to keep the gains of the previous summer. Talbot triumphed and the army advanced. They were, however, too late to save Meung and Beaugency and, with insufficient force to face the French army in the field, Talbot at length agreed to withdraw. On 18 June they began the retreat to Janville. At midday they were resting (Talbot's men had marched all but one hundred miles in two days) near the village of Patay when the French in hot pursuit came upon them. Talbot, who held the rearguard, had little time to form a strong enough defensive position and was overwhelmed by the French cavalry charge. He himself, according to Hall "sore wounded in the back",<sup>(1)</sup> was captured with Scales and Sir Walter Hungerford by the archers of Poton de Xaintrailles. Fastolf, with the van, managed to escape. In his defeat and capture Talbot paid the penalty for his failure to appreciate, both strategically and tactically, the new purposefulness and vigour in the French.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) Hall, p150.

(2) The chief sources for Patay are Waurin (1422-31, pp288-304) and Gruel (p198), both eye witnesses, and a letter of Jacques de Bourbon, Comte de la Marche. Burne gives a very full reconstruction.



Talbot was held prisoner from 1429 until 1433. Little is known of this period of his life, where he was held, what arrangements were made for his maintenance, or even details of the negotiations for his release. At first there was a great deal of activity on the English side to raise what was considered to be an 'unreasonable and importable raunceon' and for a while it looked as though his imprisonment would be of short duration. On 22 September Parliament passed an act authorising the council to negotiate his exchange for the King's prisoner Barbazan or at worst the setting aside of Barbazan's ransom to help Talbot.<sup>(1)</sup> Another act allowed 8,000 marks in coin to be taken out of the country to him by his servants.<sup>(2)</sup> There is also record of contributions from individuals and the city of Coventry, which suggests that there was more widespread sympathy for his plight.<sup>(3)</sup> This was perhaps a reaction to the impact of Jeanne D'Arc upon the war.

The plan to exchange Talbot for Barbazan was, unfortunately, almost immediately ruined, for on 24 January 1430 Barbazan was rescued when

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(1) Rot Parl, v, p338b.

(2) Wars of the English, i, pp422-3.

(3) CCR, 1429-35, p27; J. Hunter, Hallamshire, p45. Sir John Popham and others presented 250 marks to Talbot's agents which they were bound to deliver to Talbot or his attorney by Michaelmas 1430, and 27 citizens of Coventry collected 20 marks.

the French recaptured Château Gaillard.<sup>(1)</sup> After this set back, it would appear that the efforts to help Talbot flagged, although the Duke of Brittany added a gift of salt.<sup>(2)</sup> Until August 1431 Talbot must have gradually lost hope of an early release, but then Warwick captured Poton de Xaintrailles at Savignies, near Beauvais, and immediately put his prisoner aside for exchange with his son-in-law. Between May 1432 and February 1433 negotiations were conducted through Bernard de Genescell, to whom letters of safe conduct were issued for visits to Chalusset and Château Thiery and to England on business concerning the liberation of Lord Talbot.<sup>(3)</sup> Final arrangements seem to have been made early in 1433. Xaintrailles was released on 22 July, but Talbot must have returned to England earlier for he was summoned to Parliament on 24 May and by 16 July had undertaken to go back to France with a new retinue, agreeing on that day to escort one Roger Winter to Arques.<sup>(4)</sup>

Hence Talbot went almost immediately back to the war. He appears to have gone to Paris and from there set out on his first campaign with

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(1) Ramsay, i, p414, especially n6. Barbazan had been a prisoner since the fall of Melun, November 1420.

(2) CPR, 1429-36, p211. On 8 July 1432 Talbot was given licence to export this salt free of duty.

(3) Ramsay, p432; Feodera, iv, Pt iv, pp178, 190.

(4) Ramsay, p450; CCR, 1429-35, p244; Proc Priv Counc, iv, p167. Talbot possibly came home with Bedford who landed on 18 June.



the Burgundian Lisle Adam. The allied force joined the Duke of Burgundy and his army before Passy in August. Passy surrendered on 1 September and Burgundy continued on a highly successful campaign in Champagne, taking Avallon, Cravant, Mailly and finally, in early November, Pierre-Perthuis.<sup>(1)</sup> After the closing of operations Talbot returned once more to England.

Talbot's brief stay in England (November-March) was taken up partly by his private affairs. In January he was at Blackmere with his Lady and also his brother Richard, the Archbishop of Dublin.<sup>(2)</sup> The outcome of this meeting was probably the conveyance of the lordship to Lady Margaret and her children, a step taken in recognition perhaps of her father's invaluable help in securing his release.<sup>(3)</sup> Soon after this meeting he was retained again to serve in France and on 10 February orders were issued for the muster of his retinue on 11 March.<sup>(4)</sup> Before he sailed he received some financial settlement from the Crown for arrears of wages; on 15 February he agreed to accept £1,000 in full

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(1) Ramsay, i, p450.

(2) BP 76/1433-4.

(3) For the details of this see above p52.

(4) CPR, 1429-36, p353; Dugdale, p329. According to Dugdale, quoting an indenture since lost, Talbot was retained to serve for six months with 18 lances and 600 archers.

payment of all sums owing, which he received ten days later.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus satisfied he went back to the war. He was not to return to England again until 1442.

(ii)

The period 1434-45 was both the longest and most important of Talbot's war career. It was not spectacular. The period was one of military stalemate, but in this situation his qualities stood out at their best and his service to the Crown was invaluable. Bedford promoted Talbot to high command almost immediately on his landing, for he was Lieutenant-General of the Île de France by 16 May and also of the land between the rivers Seine, Oise, Somme and the sea by 20 June. He thus ranked with the Earl of Arundel, who was at the time the Lieutenant-General for the lands to the west of the Seine.<sup>(2)</sup> The two regional commanders joined forces in early May and marched to Paris, making a

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(1) Proc Priv Counc, iv, p204; Devon, Issues, p423.

(2) BN, PO 2787, Talbot section 9; AN, JJ 75/313. Talbot succeeded Lord Willoughby as Lieutenant-General of the lands between the rivers; Arundel held his post in the previous year (Wars of the English, ii, p564; E. Carleton-Williams, My Lord of Bedford, p228). Talbot also took up the Captaincies of Neufchatel and Gisors, indentures being made at Rouen on 16 May, presumably by Talbot's servants (BN, Ms Fr 25771/859, 94; BN, PO 2787, Talbot section 9-12).



detour to reduce the minor fortress of Jouy, between Gisors and Beauvais.<sup>(1)</sup>

For the next eighteen months Talbot's main task was to police the Île de France and particularly to clear the French from the valley of the Oise where they had recently established themselves, threatening communications between Rouen and Paris. Once more he was joined for the campaign by the Burgundian Lisle Adam and they achieved their first success in mid-May, when Beaumont was abandoned by La Hire's brother, Amada de Vignerolles. Vignerolles retreated to Creil where he took his stand. He was killed during the ensuing siege, however, and on 20 June, the captain of the town having treated with the allies, the gates were opened.<sup>(2)</sup> According to the Bourgeois of Paris Talbot returned to Paris after the fall of Creil,<sup>(3)</sup> but if so he was soon out in the field again. Having received reinforcements of 700 men from England<sup>(4)</sup> he proceeded to clear the French from Neufville-en-Ésmoy, La Rouge Maison, Crepy-en-Valois and Clermont before 24 August when he was created Count of

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(1) Bourgeois, p299; Monstrelet, i, p627.

(2) Monstelet, i, pp627-8.

(3) Bourgeois, p299.

(4) CPR, 1429-36, p359. On 18 June Talbot was commissioned to muster the English reinforcements, including Lord Clinton, Sir Richard Woodville and Sir Thomas Hoo and their retinues when they came into his presence.

Clermont by Bedford in token of his services. The summer operations were then brought to an end by a sweep in the direction of Beauvais.<sup>(1)</sup> As its Lieutenant-General Talbot had brought far greater security to the Île de France.

But despite the successes of 1434 the English hold on the Île de France remained very tenuous. Even while the army had been besieging Creil French freebooters had had a free run of the area right up to the gates of Paris.<sup>(2)</sup> Talbot was possibly drawn away from Paris in February 1435 to help Arundel deal with the rising of the peasantry in Caen,<sup>(3)</sup> but by May he was back patrolling the region.<sup>(4)</sup> In spite of his vigilance, however, the Captains of Melun and Lagny succeeded in capturing St. Denis on the night of 31 May-1 June. Joined by Lords Willoughby and Scales, Talbot set about raising a relief force, but they were called away to the defence of Orville, near Louviers. As a result the French enjoyed undisturbed possession of St. Denis and, furthermore,

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(1) Monstelet, pp627-8; AN, JJ 175/67/312, 313.

(2) Bourgeois, p299.

(3) The author of Cleopatra C IV, printed by C. L. Kingsford, Chronicles of London, p137 is the only source to associate Talbot with Arundel with the crushing of this rising. His information, however, may be accurate, for the author of the chronicle appears to have had firsthand information of the events in Normandy in the years 1434-44 and it is a useful supplement to the accounts of the French chroniclers.

(4) BN, Ms Fr 25772/944, 63; BN, PO 2787, Talbot section 13.



the freedom of the environs of Paris, until the last week of August when at length siege was laid. The place was not recaptured until 4 October.<sup>(1)</sup>

Before the recapture of St. Denis two events took place which permanently altered the English position in the war. The Treaty of Arras completely changed the balance of power, which more than anything else had enabled the English to hold their own, and the death of Bedford a week later not only robbed them of a statesmanlike leader, but also seriously undermined English morale and French acceptance of the régime.<sup>(2)</sup> Until September 1435 the English could still entertain hopes of returning to the offensive; after September 1435 they were committed to the hopeless defence of the conquests. Following Bedford's death a temporary reorganisation of the command and an immediate change of strategy was necessary. Arundel having died of his wounds received at Gerberoy in May, Lords Talbot, Scales and Willoughby were left as the senior Captains.<sup>(3)</sup> Talbot it appears took over the command of Rouen,<sup>(4)</sup> whilst

(1) Monstrelet, i, p639; Bourgeois, pp305-9.

(2) The author of Cleopatra C IV put it this way: "the lond whas at that tyme full of treson aftyr the death of the Duke of Bedford". C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p141.

(3) Scales succeeded Arundel as Lieutenant-General for lower Normandy and was also made Steward of Normandy by Bedford (BM, Ad Ch 6880, 1460).

(4) Talbot was not officially created Captain of Rouen until 21 April 1436, although there are references to him in that office from January. It seems more than likely that he took over the duties of Captain in the autumn, after Bedford's death. He held no higher official position although he was referred to as the King's Lieutenant in Normandy in letters of 13 May 1436 (BN, Ms Fr 26061/2812; AN, K 64/1/34; BL, Ad Ch 7980; BM, Ad Ch 3781).

Scales and Willoughby collected troops at Evreux to face a threat from Dunois at Chartres. When Dunois' threat did not materialise Willoughby took up the defence of Paris and Scales rejoined Talbot in Rouen.<sup>(1)</sup> By the time that winter came down they were thus prepared to meet French attacks on their principal positions.

The expected attack came in December, but from an unexpected quarter and with devastating results. On 29 October the Marshal de Rieux captured Dieppe. This at first appeared an isolated event. But from Dieppe, Rieux and his band of freebooters stirred up the population of the Caux and in mid-December the peasantry rebelled. Organised and led by one Le Carurier, the mob formed itself into an army and, aided by freebooters, overran the Caux. In the week over Christmas all the principal English strongholds, Fécamp, Valmont, Tancarville, Lillebonne, Montivilliers and Harfleur fell to them and only Caudebec was left in English hands.<sup>(2)</sup> Rouen itself was directly threatened and there was a widespread and justifiable fear that the citizens would join the rebellion. "There was so much treson walkyng that men wist not what to do".<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Beaucourt, iii, pp5-6. Scales was in Rouen by 5 November (BM, Ad Ch 1460).

(2) Waurin, 1431-47, pp104-10; Basin, i, pp217-9; Chartier, i, p174.

(3) So the author of Cleopatra C IV (C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p140).



However, Talbot was one who did know. With the English position in Normandy thus on the verge of collapse, he counterattacked. He sent reinforcements under Fulk Eyton to Caudebec and when the peasant army moved on that town the new garrison charged out and dispersed it.<sup>(1)</sup> Talbot followed up with two sorties from Rouen, one setting out on 4 January and the other on 10 January in which he scattered and slaughtered the remainder of the rabble and laid waste the countryside and towns. The rising was crushed with the utmost ruthlessness.<sup>(2)</sup> The area of the Caux was stripped of all provisions; all the cattle and sheep that could be found were driven into Caudebec and Rouen. Having thus disposed of the peasants Talbot turned to face the more dangerous threat of an advance by French royal soldiers. Reinforcements were brought into Rouen, whilst Sir Thomas Hoo was sent with one hundred men to reinforce the garrison of Gisors.<sup>(3)</sup> The attack, when it came at the end of January, was only a raid by a small force under La Hire and Xaintrailles, who were relying on the citizens to open the gates. But Talbot's precautions forestalled them and while camped at Ry, ten miles east of the city, on

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(1) Four hundred men were placed in the town (BN, Ms Fr 25772/1050; Basin, i, p217).

(2) Both Basin and the author of Cleopatra C IV give accounts of this. Basin, i, pp217-9; C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p140. The author of Cleopatra C V specifies the dates and that Lillebonne was sacked.

(3) Ibid; BN, Ms Fr 25772/1052-57; AN, K 64/1/7, 31.

the night of 2 February, they were surprised and routed by a dawn attack.<sup>(1)</sup>

Rouen may have been saved, but Paris was still in grave danger. Talbot was apparently well aware of this, for he sent half his own personal retinue, and probably as many other troops as he could spare, to reinforce Willoughby early in February.<sup>(2)</sup> But Paris was doomed. The French captured St. Germain-en-Laye in December and Pontoise on 20 February, effectively cutting it off from Rouen. The siege itself was opened in March, and outnumbered, isolated, and with the city in rebellion, Willoughby surrendered on 17 April.<sup>(3)</sup> With the Île de France in their hands the French launched a full scale assault on Normandy. Fortunately for the English none of the three armies involved showed much vigour.<sup>(4)</sup> The most successful was that under La Hire and Xaintrailles, which succeeded in capturing the town of Gisors. Sir Thomas Hoo was shut up in the castle until Talbot dashed to the rescue,

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(1) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p140; Waurin, 1431-47, pp216-9; Burne, p281.

(2) AN, K 64/1/32, 34; 10/15. Talbot could probably afford to send reinforcements to Paris as Sir Henry Norbury and a retinue of 400 arrived from England in February (C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p140).

(3) Bourgeois, pp311-8.

(4) Beaucourt, iii, p8.



retaking the town by assault on 7 May.<sup>(1)</sup> For the second time in the year La Hire and Xaintrailles were driven off and the advance on Normandy was abandoned.

Although he had successfully weathered the storm, Talbot did not relax, for he continued to build up his strength in Rouen, garrisoning the castle himself with an enlarged retinue.<sup>(2)</sup> In June Richard of York, the new Governor-General, landed to relieve Talbot, but before marching to Rouen he laid siege to and captured Chambrois.<sup>(3)</sup> York's arrival with substantial reinforcements brought the crisis to an end and in late summer the English were even able to take the offensive. Talbot made an abortive attempt to recapture St. Germaine-en-Laye, which had been under his Captaincy, whilst Sir Thomas Kyriel operated in the Pays de Bray.<sup>(4)</sup> A year after Bedford's death the English could

(1) Monstrelet, ii, p33; AN, K 64/23/16.

(2) In the summer of 1436 there were over 1,000 soldiers under his command in Rouen and these were reinforced by contingents under Sir Nicholas Burdet, Sir Thomas Dring, Sir Thomas Fleming, John Hankford, Richard Wastnes and Bernard de Montferrant. His own retinue in the castle was 120 strong (BN, Ms Fr 26061/2824, 2871, 2869, 2897; 26062/3092; Clair 201/8445/47; PO 2787 Talbot section 15, 17, 18; BM, Ad Ch 7892).

(3) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p141. York was accompanied by the Earl of Suffolk, the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Fauconberg.

(4) Beaucourt, iii, p6; BM, Ad Ch 6900; Bourgeois, p327. It was probably Talbot who, thwarted before St. Germain, pillaged the Île de France up to the gates of Paris entirely unopposed in September. This was the first of a series of raids into that area.

at least feel confident of holding Normandy. For this they had largely to thank Talbot's tenacious and vigorous leadership.

The English had saved Normandy in 1436, but it was very much a war-scarred Normandy. The wholesale destruction of large tracts of country left its mark not only on the inhabitants, but also on the conduct of the war. Although the exhaustion of English resources and the French lack of determination both contributed to the stalemate that ensued, the most important factor was the existence of large areas of devastated countryside which effectively prevented the mounting of major operations.<sup>(1)</sup> Basin gave a very full description of the conditions, particularly in his native Caux.<sup>(2)</sup> It was, he wrote, one of the richest parts of France before the rising of 1435. Afterwards it was a desert. All the fields were left uncultivated; famine and epidemic followed. Ten years later the land had become a forest of scrub so thick that one could barely trace the roads. Eventually all the land between the Seine, Somme, Oise and the sea was so devastated.<sup>(3)</sup> By

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(1) This does not seem to have been given its due weight in histories. Beaucourt, for instance, restricts his comment to a footnote (op cit, vii, p8 n3). See also E. Perroy, The Hundred Years War, pp305-6.

(2) Thomas Basin was born in Caudebec in 1412 and studied at Paris and in Italy and Hungary. He returned to Normandy (Caen University) in 1441 and became Bishop of Lisieux in 1447. He probably saw the aftermath and had plenty of firsthand information of the devastation of the Caux. His 'History' is of interest because it was one of the earliest northern European attempts to write after the classical manner and is far more objective than others.

(3) Basin, i, pp213-27. The wholesale destruction also impressed Chartier (i, pp245-8) and the author of Cleopatra C IV (C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p140).



1437 the area of devastation had spread to the Île de France. In large towns the poor were seen dying on dunghills.<sup>(1)</sup>

Two incidents show how the conditions affected the conduct of the war. In 1436 York, after his landing in France, led his army before Fécamp, but because the country was already devastated and the weather so hot many died of hunger and disease and the siege had to be abandoned. Basin concluded that conditions were so bad that it was almost impossible to maintain an army in that part of France, were it only 1,000 or 1,500 horsemen.<sup>(2)</sup> In the following year a body of about 2,000 French moved into eastern Normandy towards Gisors, but as they found great difficulty in finding provisions they turned back and raided the relatively untouched lands of Picardy.<sup>(3)</sup> Such events only spread the devastation over an ever wider area.

It became increasingly difficult, therefore, for either side to keep armies in the field of sufficient strength to achieve a decisive victory. Conditions inevitably demanded a war of attrition. The French concentrated on picking off isolated English outposts (such as

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(1) Monstrelet, ii, pp61, 68.

(2) Basin, i, pp249-51. Fécamp was eventually recaptured by York later in the year.

(3) Monstrelet, ii, p60.

Meaux, Montereau and Montargis)<sup>(1)</sup> and on a steady encroachment on all the borders of Normandy. The English, whilst endeavouring to keep hold of the outposts, had not only to hold the frontiers of the Duchy, but also to recover the towns and fortresses of the Caux. This latter task was never completed. From time to time French or Burgundian territory was raided, primarily, one suspects, to maintain morale by offering the opportunity for plunder, but for the most part the English strategy was to consolidate their hold on the Duchy of Normandy. It was in this defensive warfare that Talbot proved himself a master. Between 1436-42 he fought without cease to secure the Duchy for Henry VI.

The new Governor of Normandy, Richard, Duke of York, who arrived in June 1436, was a young man of 24 taking on his first command. He was a completely inexperienced soldier and administrator. Although he was never very willing to devote himself to Normandy and took the first opportunity to go back to England, he has, however, generally been praised by historians for the success of this, his first period of office.<sup>(2)</sup> On the other hand, not all contemporary opinion was favourable. The

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(1) Montereau fell in 1437, Montargis in 1438 and Meaux in 1439.

(2) For recent acceptance of this assumption see E. F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century, pp465-6.



author of Cleopatra C IV, with his eye-witness information, commented that after taking Fécamp in the autumn of 1436 "he did nor more in all his tyme". And the author of the Chronicon Henrici VI, although he blamed his council, also considered that York did not do much.<sup>(1)</sup> It is in fact arguable that, disinterested and inexperienced as he was, he left much to the councillors and soldiers who were conducting affairs when he arrived. Civil affairs were perhaps entrusted to the experienced hands of the council under the Chancellor of the Duchy, Louis of Luxemburg; <sup>(2)</sup> for the prosecution of the war he turned to Talbot, the acting commander on his arrival.

One of York's first acts, it appears, was to create Talbot Marshal of France.<sup>(3)</sup> Although in origin a judicial and administrative rank, it already had overtones of the highest field rank and this promotion may

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(1) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p141; Chronicon Henrici VI, ed J. A. Giles, p18. The author of the Chronicon wrote of 1436 "in isto anno deputatur Dux Eboraci in custodem et protectorem Franciae et Normaniae; sed quia juvenis fuit, ejus consiliari non audebant ipsum ad praelium instigare, timentes aemulorum periculum". See also J. S. Roskell, 'Sir William Oldhall', Nottingham Medieval Studies, v (1961), pp96-7.

(2) In his later years Bedford relied heavily on Louis of Luxemburg who conducted civil affairs during the Regent's absences. It was perhaps significant that during York's first administration moneys sent for the keeping of the Duchy were received by him and not York. (E. F. Jacob, op cit, p466).

(3) Talbot was Marshal before 23 August 1436 (BN, Ms Fr 25773/1128).

well have recognised Talbot's place at the head of the army. Of equal interest was the arrangement made over the Captaincy of Rouen, traditionally an office held by the Governor of Normandy. On 22 November, according to custom, Talbot surrendered the Captaincy to York, but he at once became York's Lieutenant or 'the Keeper and Governor of the castle, town and bridge of Rouen on behalf of the Duke of York' with all the actual rights and duties of Captain. The change of command seems to have been merely titular and even this was forgotten by the garrison controller who named Talbot as Captain twice on contrerolles in 1437.<sup>(1)</sup> For all practical purposes Talbot remained Captain until Warwick's arrival a year later. York's reliance on Talbot was not just reflected in the matter of rank and office. Between 16 November and 28 December all the lances and half the archers of Talbot's personal retinue were detailed to act as York's bodyguard ('ester entour la personne du Monseigneur le Duc d'York'),<sup>(2)</sup> perhaps at a time when Talbot was

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(1) BM, Ad Ch 6911; BN, Ms Fr 25774/1245, 6. Rouen had three separate garrisons. There is some difficulty over the dating of Talbot's appointment. York officially became Captain of the castle on 22 November (BN, Clair 201/8455/57) and of the town on or before 20 November, when a garrison under his name was mustered (-, Ms Fr 25773). But yet exactly the same garrison was said to be Talbot's, as York's Lieutenant, three days later (-, Clair 201/8463/66). It could be that the garrison had been raised and supplied by Talbot, but not officially as Lieutenant, which duties he took up after 22 November. Talbot's official letters of appointment were not issued until 5 February following (BM, Ad Ch 425).

(2) BN, PO 2787, Talbot section 21.



constantly in his company. Moreover, when, after the army had been reviewed,<sup>(1)</sup> operations were begun again, it was Talbot not York that commanded in the field.

The first operation was a highly successful raid into France, undertaken in the depth of winter. He set out with a small force at the beginning of February and, having taken Ivry to the west of Paris, came down to the Seine and surprised Pontoise on 12 February. He perhaps even made an attempt on the walls of Paris itself (17 February), but eventually he left a garrison in Pontoise and swept up into the Vexin, clearing the French from the neighbourhood of Gisors and penetrating as far as Beauvais. By 23 March he was back on the Seine at Les Andelys, from which he returned to Rouen before 20 April. The principal gain of this daring winter raid was the town of Pontoise, which not only secured the Seine route below Paris but also established a threat to the capital itself.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) All indentures and military appointments were made in November and December. In addition to the arrangement over Rouen Talbot surrendered the Captaincy of Gisors to Sir Thomas Hoo on 10 November (Wars of the English, ii, pp282-5) and Gaillard to Sir Robert Roos on 5 December (R. A. Newhall, op cit, p73 n147). Talbot was personally retained to serve with 20 lances and 60 archers in the field, for nine months, on 16 November (BN, Ms Fr 26062/3002). A general muster was ordered for 9 December but was postponed until 27 (R. A. Newhall, op cit, pp133-4).

(2) Beaucourt, iii, p10; Ramsay, ii, p2; Bourgeois, p329; Chartier, i, pp233-5. Chartier gives a full account of the taking of Pontoise. According to the Bourgeois of Paris the English attacked Paris on the first Sunday in Lent (17 February). Talbot's personal retinue was mustered at Les Andelys on 23 March (BM, Ad Ms 28315, f 2). For his presence in Rouen before 20 April see BM, Ad Ch 3802.

Talbot's next operation was a routine but vital revictualling expedition to Meaux, which was completed before the end of June.<sup>(1)</sup> He then turned his attention to the task of reconquering the Caux. On 12 July he was before Baudemont, near Tancarville, probably making a reconnaissance,<sup>(2)</sup> for by the end of the month, even though York was daily expecting to be relieved by the Earl of Warwick, it was decided to lay siege to Tancarville. Tancarville lies on the north bank of the Seine between Caudebec and Harfleur and was an obstacle that had to be cleared before the recovery of Harfleur itself could be tackled. Orders were sent out for garrison contingents to gather at Jumièges in the week following 7 August. The devastated condition of the country did not help the besieging force, but Talbot persevered and Tancarville eventually fell in early November. The town's surrender may well have been hastened by the arrival of the Earl of Warwick, whose fleet sailed into the Seine on 8 November.<sup>(3)</sup>

York's successor was the most experienced and renowned of Henry V's surviving Captains and the obvious choice outside the royal blood for the

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(1) BN, Ms Fr 26065/3630.

(2) BN, Ms Fr 26063/3217, 20. Contingents from garrisons were ordered to meet Talbot 'in the field' on 6 July and before Baudemont on 12 July.

(3) R. A. Newhall, op cit, pp143-6; C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p144. Much detail has survived of the army employed, for discussion of which see below p258-9 On 27 November Talbot received the wages for 886 men for 15 days service in defence of an unnamed fortress, probably Tancarville (BM, Ad Ch 1472).



post of Governor of Normandy. Warwick brought a more active leadership to the English effort, but because of his advancing age he too turned to his son-in-law to lead his forces in the field. And, although he took over the complete command of Rouen, during the following year he gave Talbot command of several of the key frontier posts.<sup>(1)</sup> Warwick's arrival, therefore, led to little slackening in Talbot's responsibilities.

Immediately after the fall of Tancarville Talbot was sent to the rescue of Le Crotoy, being besieged by the Duke of Burgundy. The Burgundians broke off the siege on his arrival, allowing him to cross the Somme unopposed. Having relieved the town, the English raided several miles into Picardy, plundering the relatively unspoiled countryside and challenging the cautious Burgundy to a fight. After two or three weeks they recrossed the Somme and returned to Rouen loaded with booty.<sup>(2)</sup> No sooner had they returned than word came that Montargis was besieged and on 20 December Talbot and Lord Fauconberg were ordered to collect a relief force at Conches and Evreux. But before they set out, François du Surienne in command there made a profitable sale to his besiegers.

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(1) Caudebec was taken over by his Lieutenant, Fulk Eyton (BN, Clair 201/2465/69) but on the other hand Talbot became Captain of Falaise (1 January 1438), Vernon (28 February), Creil (before September) and Meaux (on 8 October). In 1439 he also became Captain of Pontoise (see also Appendix IV).

(2) Waurin, 1431-47, pp231-40 gives a detailed account of this raid. Talbot was ordered to the relief of Le Crotoy before 20 November (EM, Ad Ch 3830). Amongst the booty Sir Thomas Kyriel brought back Burgundy's private carriage (C. L. Kingsford, on cit, p144).

Nevertheless, Talbot and Fauconberg still kept their army in the field, being at Evreux in the last weeks of January.<sup>(1)</sup> Eventually an alternative occupation was found in the reduction of the small fortresses of Longchamps and Neufmarchie, which was completed before 19 March.<sup>(2)</sup>

The two Captains still continued to hold their force in readiness, until at the beginning of May it was decided to return to the Caux.<sup>(3)</sup>

For the campaign of 1438 Talbot was joined by Sir Thomas Kyriel. The immediate objective was Longueville, which, with a number of fortresses in its neighbourhood, fell without much resistance, since the defendants were so ill-supplied.<sup>(4)</sup> Having completed the subjection of that area Talbot and Kyriel moved towards Harfleur in July. Their troops were mustered before Montivilliers on 20 July and Gravelle on 31 July.<sup>(5)</sup>

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(1) BN, PO 2787, Talbot section, 25; Clair 201/8443/44; BM, Ad Ch 11973. On 20 January Richard Hankford and three lances left Rouen to join Talbot at Evreux where they stayed until March (BN, Ms Fr 25774/1286). For Surienne and Montargis see A. Bossuat, Gressart et Surienne, pp266-7.

(2) These lay between Gisors and Gournay. Ramsay, ii, p7; BM, Ad Ch 11991).

(3) Talbot was paid for his forces in the field, then numbering 660, on 21 April (BN, Clair 202/8417/8, 9).

(4) Waurin, 1431-47, pp242-3. Other places captured included Colmesnil and Guillemercourt.

(5) BN, Ms Fr 25774/1348, 9; 1391, 93. They were still at Gravelle on 10 August.



Although it is unrecorded by any of the chroniclers, it appears that an attempt was now made on Harfleur by both land and sea for a squadron of eight ships blockaded the port at the same time. The attempt seems to have been abandoned after the squadron fell into the hands of the enemy on the last day of August.<sup>(1)</sup> But despite this failure it had been a successful summer, for only Harfleur and Dieppe and their neighbourhoods remained to be cleared.

After over a year in the field Talbot now joined Warwick in Rouen. In October he departed on some secret enterprise and in December succeeded in surprising and recapturing St. Germain-en-Laye, but for the most of the winter he remained in the company of the ailing Warwick. And, with the council in England making overtures for peace, no new military operations were undertaken. However, Warwick died on 30 April and Normandy was left once again without a Governor.<sup>(2)</sup>

As in the year following Bedford's death, so during the period of two years before Richard of York returned to take up his second tour as

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- (1) Waurin does perhaps allude to this (1431-47, p248). Charles, Count of Eu was exchanged during the summer and he marched through Normandy to Harfleur (ibid; Ramsay, ii, p145). According to the author of Cleopatra C IV a fleet sailed into the Seine on the last day of August flying the flag of St. George. The English squadron welcomed them, only to be captured (C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p145).
- (2) On 16 October Talbot was described as having left Rouen on some secret enterprise (BM, Ad Ch 3855). St. Germain was captured on 18 December (A. Bossuat, op cit, pp270-1). On 22 and 26 April Talbot was associated with Warwick in sending messengers to various garrisons (BM, Ad Ch 443).

Governor, the administration of the Duchy was conducted by the council under the leadership of Louis of Luxemburg.<sup>(1)</sup> But on this occasion Talbot did not hold the supreme military command. This went instead to John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, who had been released in exchange for Charles, Count of Eu in 1438. Somerset's full rank, for which he received a salary of 6,000 livres tournois per annum, was 'Lieutenant-General of the King for the matter of War in the Realm of France and the Duchy of Normandy'. He was never, as Waurin suggests, the full or official Governor.<sup>(2)</sup> Somerset's appointment to the military command may no doubt have owed something to the supremacy of his uncle, Cardinal Beaufort, at court, but he was also the highest ranking peer in Normandy and as such the natural choice. If Talbot resented the consequent reduction in his status<sup>(3)</sup> he did not show it, for he continued to serve under Somerset's leadership as diligently as he had under Warwick.

During the summer of 1439, while Cardinal Beaufort was making a

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- (1) Louis chaired at least two council meetings at Rouen and Pont-de-l'Arche.
- (2) Waurin, 1431-47, p257. This is one of several known inaccuracies in Waurin's account. Both Ramsay (ii, p16) and E. F. Jacob (op cit, p467) accept it. But Stevenson in Wars of the English, ii, p304, quotes a warrant in which Somerset's exact position is made clear.
- (3) One clear reflection of this was that he lost all the Captaincies he had held under Warwick. In 1440 he had none except Lisieux until he was granted the custody of Harfleur and Montivilliers on the occasion of their recapture (Wars of the English, ii, p317-9).



determined effort to reach a truce, English military operations were for the most part suspended. The one important task was to keep possession of the fortresses - Creil, Meaux, Pontoise and St. Germain-en-Laye - which Beaufort was prepared to exchange. Consequently on 21-23 June Talbot was at Vernon gathering supplies and a small escort with which to revictual Pontoise.<sup>(1)</sup> A more serious situation was created when on 20 July, the negotiations at Gravelines being at their height, the Constable Richemont laid siege to Meaux. Somerset immediately organised a relief force and led a fairly strong army under his best captains, Talbot, Scales and Fauconberg, to the rescue. They did not arrive in time to save the town, which was taken by assault on 12 August, but they were able to reinforce the stronghold of the 'market' into which the garrison had retired. Everything in their power was done to secure this. The French, who refused a challenge to fight, retreated into the town, whilst the English destroyed their siege works and transferred a quantity of captured cannon to the market. Having left 500 fresh troops under Sir William Chamberlain in the garrison the relief force returned to Rouen.<sup>(2)</sup> Chamberlain, however, proved to be an irresolute Captain and before the end of August he entered into negotiations with Richemont to surrender on 15 September if no more reinforcements arrived. Talbot

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(1) BN, Ms Fr 26066/400; BM, Ad Ch 445.

(2) Waurin, 1431-47, p257; Chartier, i, pp249-50; Gruel, p213; Proc Priv Counc, v, pp384-7. Chartier and the report published by Nicolas do not mention Somerset, but he was in charge of the arrangements for the first relief in early August (BN, Ms Fr 26066/3829, 32-3, 38, 44).

and Fauconberg were already busy organising a second relief column in Rouen on 27 August and moved forward to Vernon a few days later.<sup>(1)</sup> But the march to Meaux was for some reason delayed and Talbot did not arrive until 16 September, the day after Chamberlain surrendered. Finding Meaux in French hands he fell back on Pontoise where he was residing on 5 October.<sup>(2)</sup>

Somerset had left Rouen before the end of August and returned to England both to collect reinforcements and perhaps to further his claim to be created full Governor. His brother, Edmund, Earl of Dorset (also Talbot's brother-in-law), appears to have been left as his deputy.<sup>(3)</sup> It was Dorset who led the army, with Talbot and Scales, which went to the rescue of Avranches in December after Richemont, fresh from his success at Meaux, had turned his attention to the western borders of the Duchy. On the night of 22-23 December Dorset, Talbot and Scales surprised Richemont in his camp and completely routed him.<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) BM, Ad Ch 568.

(2) BM, Ad Ch 447.

(3) Somerset had left Rouen by 1 September when Dorset sent messages to the English Ambassadors at Gravelines concerning the siege of Meaux (Proc Priv Counc, v, p387).

(4) Beaucourt, iii, p20; Ramsay, ii, p18.



In January Somerset returned to Normandy with his reinforcements<sup>(1)</sup> and almost immediately set out on a raid into the Santois district of Picardy. He was accompanied by Talbot and a total of 1,200 troops which were mustered at Bernay on 7 February. The main objective of the raid seems to have been plunder and, according to Waurin, in this it was highly successful. But Somerset also captured Folleville before returning to Rouen in mid-March.<sup>(2)</sup>

On 21 March 1440 Somerset was referred to in official documents as being in command of almost 3,000 troops newly raised for the recovery of certain places.<sup>(3)</sup> These places were probably Harfleur and Montivilliers, which were to be the chief objectives of the summer campaign. There is some doubt as to the date at which the siege of Harfleur began. Waurin stated the beginning of April and Ramsay accepted this, but there is good reason to believe that the full English army did not appear before Harfleur until July. Certainly Talbot, who played a prominent part, was

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(1) Orders were issued on 28 December for him and his retinue to be mustered at Poole, where ships were to gather before 16 January (Ramsay, ii, p28).

(2) See particularly Waurin's account, 1431-47, pp266-73, and also Ramsay, ii, p28. For Talbot's muster see AN, K 65/1/5.

(3) BN, Ms Fr 26066.

still at Honfleur on 26 June.<sup>(1)</sup> And although Somerset may perhaps have originally planned to take command it was eventually decided that his brother Dorset would lead the besieging army. The siege, when it eventually began, was most thorough, the town being completely cut off by land and sea. The French held out until October when a determined effort to relieve the town was made by a force under the Count d'Eu. But the French attack on the section of the siegeworks commanded by Talbot was beaten off and the attempt was abandoned. This sealed the fate of Harfleur and towards the end of the month the garrison surrendered.<sup>(2)</sup>

Talbot had retired to Honfleur by 22 October,<sup>(3)</sup> but he was soon called out in the field again, for the French army that had attempted to relieve Harfleur had on its return taken the fortresses of Louviers and Conches.<sup>(4)</sup> From 29 November, therefore, he was at Pontaudemer collecting troops for the recovery of those places.<sup>(5)</sup> It appears that,

(1) Waurin, 1431-47, p274; Ramsay, ii, p28; BN, Clair 201/8471/77. Other units, however, were mustered before Harfleur on 26-28 June (BN, Clair 201/8469/73, 6; 8471/78; 202/8473/1).

(2) For accounts of the siege see Ramsay, and Burne, pp 291-2, and Waurin, 1431-47, p274 ff.

(3) BM, Ad Ch 453.

(4) Beaucourt, iii, p21.

(5) BN, Ms Fr 25775/1455-69.



after the fall of Harfleur, both Somerset and Dorset had returned to England and so once again Talbot was left as the senior commander, awaiting the arrival of Richard of York.<sup>(1)</sup> It was probably in connection with this that he received a special grant of 300 salus a quarter, back-dated from Michaelmas, on 3 December.<sup>(2)</sup>

Throughout the winter of 1440-1, with Scales and Fauconberg in his company, Talbot was preoccupied with Louviers and Conches. The possession of Louviers in French hands was of particular nuisance because it enabled them to cut the Seine between Rouen and Pontoise. Yet for some unknown reason Talbot never made an attack on either place. By 19 December he had moved up to Elbeuf. Here he stayed for at least two months while his force slowly dwindled. By 26 March he had returned to Pontaudemer, although he moved up to Pont-de-l'Arche, again threatening Louviers, in April, where he stayed until mid-May.<sup>(3)</sup> Having been frustrated in his

- (1) York had been appointed on 2 July 1440. It is possible that with the post of Governor thus decided the Beauforts had no desire to stay in Normandy after the termination of their indentures and the fall of Harfleur.
- (2) Wars of the English, ii, pp317-9.
- (3) Many documents, musters and acquittances, relating to this force, have survived. Originally planned to be 2,400 strong, the size was reduced to 1,600 by 1 January 1441 and actually mustered 929 on 26 March (see BM, Ad Ch 1201, 3006, 3910-1, 1494, 6947, 6949, 8007; BN, Ms Fr 25775-6/1455-1520). It is hard to decide whether delay led to desertion or desertion to delay. But clearly morale and discipline were suffering and this problem the council at Rouen referred to in a letter of the following June (see below p178).

plans to reduce Louviers and Conches over the winter, Talbot decided to turn back to the Caux for the recovery of Dieppe and, between 17 and 27 May, he set off with a sizable train of ordnance.<sup>(1)</sup> But he was almost immediately called back by the news that the French were advancing in strength down the Oise valley under the command, for the first time, of King Charles and had already laid siege to Creil. Talbot was back at Pont-de-Larche on 27 May gathering supplies for the relief of Creil, only to hear that Creil had fallen on 24 May.<sup>(2)</sup> The relief column, however, was kept together to succour Pontoise, on which the French advanced.

The campaign for Pontoise in 1441 was the last full scale operation undertaken by either side before the final loss of Normandy. The campaign took on additional significance because of the presence of King Charles at the head of the French army and became for the English more

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(1) Several certificates drawn up by William Forsted, Master of artillery, have survived all of which refer to service in May to the parts of Dieppe in the company of Lord Talbot. See particularly one printed by Stevenson in Wars of the English, ii, p463 and also BN, Ms Fr 26068/4346, 48, 51.

(2) Beaucourt, iii, p180. Beaucourt gives a very detailed and well documented account of the events of the summer.



than the defence of a strategically placed town,<sup>(1)</sup> for they saw the opportunity of inflicting a decisive defeat in pitched battle on the King. Moreover, in his tireless defence of the town and his efforts to bring the cautious Charles to battle, Talbot gave an ample demonstration of his skills as a soldier.

The siege was opened on a grand scale on 6 June.<sup>(2)</sup> A few days later Talbot moved forward from Pont-de-Larche to Vernon, which he made his headquarters for the supplying of Pontoise. The council in Rouen was greatly concerned at the situation. "Close upon the feast of St. John" (24 June) it wrote to England bewailing the failure of Richard of York to arrive and giving news of the siege. "Your chief adversary and his son", it wrote, "have begun the said siege before that town, and how long it can hold out against them we cannot say. For they have a great body of troops, and are wonderfully well provided with all kinds of necessaries and requisites for the war, and their

- (1) Since its recapture in 1437 the English had paid special attention to it. Richemont had tried, unsuccessfully, to storm the town in 1438. Fearing another attack in 1439 it had been revictualled and a substantial power of artillery had been installed by 12 January 1440. In the following August reinforcements were sent to the then Captain, John Stanlaw, in case the army then preparing to relieve Harfleur should make an attempt (Bourgeois, p344; BN, Ms Fr 26066/400; PO, Talbot section 2787/35; AN, K 66/34/1).
- (2) The main contemporary accounts are to be found in Waurin, Chartier, Basin and Gruel. Waurin (and subsequently Monstrelet) is the fullest.

spirits are raised and stimulated to a great pitch of pride on account of the conquest of Creil. Lord Talbot is at Vernon, waiting for all the troops that can be raised to go with him, to do his best at the siege, by God's help. Whatever diligence has been done, or whatever commands have been issued in your name to any Captains or troops by showing them your need, they have indifferently obeyed.<sup>(1)</sup> It is a great misfortune for you, our sovereign lord, that the said Lord Talbot has not a sufficient strength, for he has a high and notable desire to do the best he can for you against your said enemies".<sup>(2)</sup> The council did not expect much of a half-hearted and understrength army. Nevertheless, on 22 June Talbot did in fact succeed in entering Pontoise with supplies and reinforcements under Lord Scales, who took charge of the defence.<sup>(3)</sup> On 24 June Talbot retired to Mantes, then Rouen, where he collected more supplies which were probably delivered to Scales before the end of the month.<sup>(4)</sup>

At the beginning of July York made his long awaited appearance

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(1) See p 75, n3.

(2) Wars of the English, ii, pp603 ff.

(3) Beaucourt, iii, p181. Beaucourt states that Fauconberg was also left in Pontoise. Nevertheless, he was mustered with other elements of Talbot's army at Juziers on 13 July (BN, Ms Fr 25776/1528).

(4) So Waurin, 1431-47, pp322, 324. Basin, p262, comments that Talbot went to Pontoise twice from Rouen in June.



with a strong army of fresh troops and set out for Pontoise almost immediately. He and Talbot joined forces and mustered their combined army at Juziers on 13-14 July.<sup>(1)</sup> They were then ready to bring King Charles to battle. On 16 July they entered Pontoise unopposed. After revictualing the town the English drew up in battle array and proclaimed to King Charles, who had retreated to the east bank of the river, their intention of crossing. And about two days later they succeeded in forcing a passage upstream above Beaumont. But Charles had no intention of fighting, and himself recrossed the river, leaving a strong garrison in a bastille opposite Pontoise, and, after crossing the Seine as well, made his way to Poissy. This left the English to fortify the left bank and the bridges across the river, whilst Talbot marched down towards Conflans to keep an eye on King Charles. Without clearing the French from the bastille York and Talbot set out once more in pursuit of Charles on about 24 July and recrossed the Oise at Neuville.<sup>(2)</sup>

The events of the last week of July are by no means clear, as accounts differ. It appears that one purpose in crossing to the right bank of the Oise was to cut off French communications between Poissy and Pontoise.

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(1) Both Waurin and Basin state that Talbot joined York in Rouen. Other sources make no mention of where they met. Beaucourt, on the evidence of the musters at Juziers, assumed they met there. Waurin, 1431-47, p326; Basin, p264; Beaucourt, p183; AN, K 67/1/23-28; BN, Ms Fr 25776/1528, 9).

(2) Beaucourt, iii, pp183-7. A bridge had to be built at Neuville.

York, or some of his men, met a supply column and in the skirmish that followed the English suffered serious casualties.<sup>(1)</sup> Chartier, Gruel and Waurin all agree that York at this point decided to return to Rouen,<sup>(2)</sup> but Basin adds that Talbot suggested a final scheme whereby Charles could be caught. This was for Talbot to cross the Seine at Mantes and surprise Charles at Poissy, whilst York waited north of the river to cut off his retreat.<sup>(3)</sup> All the chroniclers agree that Talbot carried out the raid on Poissy, probably at dawn on 27 July, and Chartier supports Basin in suggesting that the aim was to capture Charles, which he narrowly failed to do.<sup>(4)</sup> (In his anger he sacked the town). Charles escaped to Conflans, but he was not intercepted by York, who had almost certainly left the region. If Basin's report that a 'pincer' movement was suggested is correct, it seems probable that York rejected it and took.

- (1) The accounts of Chartier and Waurin are more in agreement. According to both their accounts one supply column successfully reached Pontoise, as did a second. It was apparently this second column which came upon the English in the neighbourhood of Neuville. According to Basin York raided into the Île de France but there is no corroborating evidence of this.
- (2) Chartier, ii, p26; Gruel, p170; Waurin, 1431-47, p838.
- (3) Basin, i, pp266-8.
- (4) Chartier, ii, p26.



no part, as other accounts witness, in Talbot's raid on Poissy.<sup>(1)</sup>

Both sides were exhausted. The supplies around Pontoise and in the Île de France had long been exhausted and the lack of food and fodder seems to have been the chief factor in restricting the campaign to ten days. King Charles retired to St. Denis whilst York, after leaving Scales and Fauconberg in a much strengthened Pontoise, arrived back in Rouen on 1 August, his troops haggard, starving and exhausted.<sup>(2)</sup> Talbot resumed his earlier role of collecting supplies, organising a fresh convoy at Elbeouf.<sup>(3)</sup> Although the attempt to bring King Charles to battle had failed, for the time being Pontoise was secured.

But King Charles, having rested his troops, decided to renew the siege and on 16 August appeared once more before Pontoise. Talbot moved

- (1) Burne, pp298-9, accepted Basin's account as it stood, largely one suspects because it reflected credit on Talbot. To highlight his description of the attempt to ensnare Charles he takes a detail from Chartier's account - that York arrived to see the French marching by from a hill - which refers not to this episode but to the earlier attempt made to intercept supplies moving from Poissy to Pontoise. (Chartier, ii, p25). Basin simply states that York was not able to cut off Charles.
- (2) Beaucourt, iii, p187; Basin, p266. Fauconberg had joined Scales on 18 July (AN, K 67/1/29). Scales received supplies in Pontoise on 1 August (BN, Ms Fr 26068/4335).
- (3) Talbot was at Elbeouf on 16 August (AN, K 67/1/31, 2).

up to Pont-de-Larche before 20 August and on 22 August slipped into Pontoise, avoiding the French who had tried to block his route.

Fauconberg and Scales were then relieved, for when Talbot left Pontoise on 24 August Lord Clinton was left as Captain.<sup>(1)</sup> Talbot retired only as far as Mantes where he continued to keep an eye on Pontoise and maintained the flow of supplies into the town. He himself went there on at least two occasions, on 29 August and 6 September, accompanied by only a small section of his personal retinue.<sup>(2)</sup> With the lines of communication thus kept open it was clear that Charles would never be able to reduce the town by siege before winter and so he decided to take it by assault. On 16 September, after a heavy artillery barrage, the suburb around the church of Notre Dame was taken and three days later the town fell to a general assault and Clinton was captured after a brave and vigorous defence.<sup>(3)</sup>

The summer of 1441 proved exhausting for both sides. And, although the English had eventually failed to save Pontoise, by their stubborn

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(1) Beaucourt, iii, pp188-90. Musters were held at Pont-de-Larche from 20 August. Acquittances for the receipt of supplies by both Scales and Fauconberg between 22 and 24 August have survived.

(2) AN, K 67/1/33, 37, 39-41; BN, Ms Fr 25776/1532, 3.

(3) Beaucourt, iii, p191.



resistance they had prevented any further advance into Normandy. For this they had much to thank for Talbot's vigour, courage and indefatigability, for over the whole summer he had overcome the indifference of many of the English soldiers, the appalling conditions, and the harassing of the French in Louviers,<sup>(1)</sup> difficulties which perhaps partly explain the comparative brevity of York's active participation. Talbot was a master at maintaining a small, but effective, mobile force in conditions which hampered the movement of large armies. It was a quality recognised by the Bourgeois of Paris, who, commenting on the events of 1441, wrote that the English had one captain, named Talbot, who would face and hold his ground against King Charles and of whom indeed "il sembloit au semblant qu'ilz monstroient que moult le doutassent, car touzjours eux eslongnoient de lui XX ou XXX lieues, et il chevauchoit parmy France plus hardiment qu'ilz ne faisoient."<sup>(2)</sup>

During the campaign of 1441 there is a suspicion, which Basin's account heightens, that, as in 1436-7, York again relied extensively on

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(1) The French garrison of Louviers established a fort at St. Pierre du Vauvray, on the Seine, from which they effectively cut the communications and the passage of supplies by river between Rouen and Mantes. On 29 July, for instance, council arranged for food and powder to be sent to Pontoise, but warned against using the river route to Mantes because of enemy action (Cosneau, *op cit*, p323; BN, Ms Fr 26068/4335). In September 1441 the Captain of Louviers, Floquet, surprised Evreux.

(2) Bourgeois, p359.

Talbot in military affairs. This is strengthened by the arrangements made for the government of the Duchy. York appointed Talbot his Lieutenant-General for the conduct of the war and at Michaelmas reappointed him Captain of Rouen.<sup>(1)</sup> There seems little doubt that the defence of Normandy was placed in his hands. It was probably in connection with his new commission that he returned to England at the beginning of 1442. to raise reinforcements.<sup>(2)</sup> His stay was brief and the recruiting of an army of 2,500 occupied most of his time between February and May. His troops were ready to be mustered on 25 May.<sup>(3)</sup> The most important event of this brief visit was his elevation to an earldom in recognition of his services to the Crown (4 May). In the latin patent Talbot was created 'Comes Salopiae' and it is likely that he had intended to be known as Earl of Shropshire, but from the very first his English title was Earl of Shrewsbury.<sup>(4)</sup>

The newly created Earl of Shrewsbury landed at Harfleur, where

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- (1) BN, Clair 202/8479/12; BN, Ms Fr 25763/734; BM, Ad Ch 470, 1209.
  - (2) Orders and acquittances for receipt of payment for the expence of his journey to England, dated 6 and 11 February 1442, have survived. BN, PO, Talbot section 2787/42; BN, Clair 202/8478/5.
  - (3) Wars of the English, i, pp430-1; Ramsay, ii, p42; CPR, 1441-6, p106.
  - (4) CP, xi, p701.



his army was again mustered, on 15 June. He was joined by Lord Fauconberg and garrison contingents before opening his campaign, the original objective of which was to recover the French enclave of Louviers, Conches and Evreux. On 14-16 July he was at Pont-de-Larche and from there marched down to Conches. His operations were made more difficult by the presence of a French army under Dunois to the South, which attacked Gallardon in an effort to draw Shrewsbury away from Conches. But the siege of Conches was not abandoned. The town surrendered and after a garrison had been installed under Thomas Pigot, there was still time to save Gallardon.<sup>(1)</sup> Having done so, Shrewsbury returned to the Louviers sector, where he was stationed at Gaillon on 13 September.

It was probably because of Dunois' presence and sallies made by the garrison of Evreux,<sup>(2)</sup> all hampering his operations, that Shrewsbury now decided to abandon any attempt on Louviers and Evreux and retire north of the Seine for an attack on Dieppe. Consequently, in preparation for a siege of this, the last French enclave in the Caux, an army and a large column of ordnance and supplies were gathered at Jumièges in the

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(1) Beaucourt, iii, p25; PRO, E 101/54/2; BN, Ms Fr 25776/1573-8, 1581, 91; AN, K 67/12/67-77; BM, Ad Ch 469. Musters were taken at Conches on 17-20 August. Thomas Pigot and 270 men of Shrewsbury's army were installed in the town before 7 September.

(2) Floquet, in Evreux, sallied out and discomfited a force of English, killing about 240, near Granville (Waurin, 1431-47, p371).

the last days of October.<sup>(1)</sup> His army, however, was now much reduced, numbering at one estimate 1,500 men, and it was this somewhat insufficient force that marched to Dieppe in early November,<sup>(2)</sup> the fort of Charlemesnil being reduced en route. But Shrewsbury had little hope of maintaining a full siege and blockade, and so, on reaching Dieppe, he decided to concentrate his men and artillery on a hill known as the Pollet, overlooking the town and harbour, and to reduce the place by bombardment. Having supervised the establishment of this and the building of defences for his position he returned to Rouen in December, leaving Sir William Peyto in command. But even before he left the ubiquitous Dunois appeared with 1,000 men with which he took charge of the defence.<sup>(3)</sup>

The establishment of the position on the Pollet proved to be Shrewsbury's last act of war before the Truce of Tours. Operations virtually came to a standstill. The force before Dieppe remained isolated

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- (1) Musters of the army, consisting of 600 men from garrisons and the army brought over in June, were taken on 27-28 October. The supplies and ordnance were carried in at least 55 carts (BN, Ms Fr 25776/1586-91; BM, Ad Ch 144).
- (2) So Chartier, ii, p36.
- (3) Ibid, pp36-8; Waurin, 1431-47, p372. Talbot was still there when mustered on 28 November, on which day Dunois arrived. He left part of his personal retinue in the fort under the command of (?) his Lieutenant Sir John Ripley. Chartier's information is remarkably accurate. He gives the size of the English garrison left in the Pollet as 500-600. In January 1443 it was mustered at 500, in February and March at 550 and in May and June at 570 (BN, Ms Fr 25776/1570, 1589, 1612, 1628, 1639).



and neglected throughout the winter and much of the following summer. York and Shrewsbury seem to have relied on receiving further reinforcements with which to complete the task of reducing the town. These, however, were diverted to Somerset who was appointed to independent and equal command in Aquitaine and France. York received both insult and injury. In June, after it had become apparent that no supplies or reinforcements were forthcoming, Shrewsbury led a deputation on York's behalf to London. On 21 June he was assured that Somerset's appointment had implied no disrespect to York and on 8 and 13 July secured trifling grants in York's favour and assurances of support for the force before Dieppe, including the somewhat insufficient posting of a ballinger to their assistance.<sup>(1)</sup> While at home he also took the opportunity to attend once more to his personal affairs. On 3 June he was at Cheswardine settling some of his estates on his eldest son by Margaret Beauchamp, and on 12 July he appeared in Chancery to have his arrangements confirmed and acknowledged.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p151; Proc Priv Counc, v, pp289, 290, 298, 301, 306. For his stay in London wine and venison were sent from Sheffield to London (THAS, vi, p240). Before leaving he probably received the promise of annuities worth £100 which were granted on 2 March following (CPR, 1441-6, p235).

(2) CCR, 1441-47, pp155-6.

Shrewsbury returned to France early in August<sup>(1)</sup> and a few days later, 14 August, his fortress outside Dieppe fell to the vigorous assault of the Dauphin. Three hundred English were killed and Sir William Peyto and many others, including several of his own men, were taken prisoner.<sup>(2)</sup> Disgruntled and disillusioned perhaps with the council's attitude, neither he nor York had done anything to assist them, although they could easily have mobilized the garrison contingents. No doubt intensified by this affair, one can detect a developing lethargy and weariness in Shrewsbury's actions in 1443, perhaps understandable in a man who had passed his fifty-fifth year. It appears too that discipline and morale had so deteriorated that even he was finding it difficult to control the troops. The author of *Cleopatra C IV* commented,

"In this same yere the Erll of Shrewesbery leyde sege by watyr and lond to Depe; and kept it a whyle till he ferd so foule with his men, that thei wolde not longer abyde with him; and so he whas fayne to high away thense to Rooen and so brak the seege".<sup>(3)</sup>

1443 perhaps marks the beginning of the disintegration of the army, when not only the soldiers, but also the most conscientious and loyal of the commanders were losing faith and a sense of purpose.

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(1) His armour was carried down to Dover at the end of July (*THAS*, vi, p242).

(2) Chartier, ii, p39; Basin, i, p289; Waurin, 1431-47, pp381-2. The prisoners included Sir John Ripley, Talbot's bastard son, Henry, and John Housacre of his own retinue.

(3) C. L. Kingsford, *op cit*, p150.



There is no reason to doubt, therefore, that Shrewsbury welcomed the peace moves which the council made in the beginning of 1444 after the débâcle of Somerset's expedition. Suffolk was appointed to treat with Charles VII in February and passed through Rouen on his way to Tours in March. On 8 April Shrewsbury became a Conservator of a preliminary truce covering Vendome and Le Mans and on 28 May the general truce for two years was signed.<sup>(1)</sup> He could at last look forward to the peaceful enjoyment of his Norman estates and other less onerous duties, such as acting as godfather at the christening of York's daughter, Elizabeth, in Rouen Cathedral in September.<sup>(2)</sup> In 1445, however, he was recalled to England, being appointed Lieutenant of Ireland for the second time on 12 March.<sup>(3)</sup> But before returning he was involved in the pageantry of the homecoming of Queen Margaret. In November 1444 Suffolk had returned to France to collect Henry VI's bride. In January he and Margaret met at Nancy and it is likely that Shrewsbury was in the English party which was feted there for several weeks.<sup>(4)</sup> In March the procession to England,

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(1) Ramsay, ii, pp58-60; Bossuat, op cit, p281.

(2) CP, xi, p701.

(3) CPR, 1441-6, p345.

(4) Ramsay, ii, pp61-3; Beaucourt, iv, p92. In the list printed by Stevenson Shrewsbury is not included in Suffolk's entourage at Nancy, but d'Escouchy named him, and his Countess was certainly in attendance with the Marchioness of Suffolk. Amongst those also in the English party were Sir James Ormond and Shrewsbury's brother-in-law, Sir Hugh Cokesey.

via Paris and Rouen, took place. Talbot was certainly in attendance then and returned to England in state with the Queen.<sup>(1)</sup>

The discussion of Talbot's career in France has inevitably been taken up largely by a narrative of his military exploits. Yet he was also very much involved in both military and civilian, judicial and administrative work, although there is a general shortage of evidence on these matters. From 1436, as Marshal of France, he was supreme judge of all military disputes arising during active service in France and Normandy.<sup>(2)</sup> His powers were challenged by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in the early 1440s, who claimed the Marshalsea of Normandy, and were apparently undermined by the substitution of commissions of ordinary judges in some cases. On appeal by Talbot, the Crown ruled that the Marshalsea of Normandy belonged to the Marshal of France and declared that all causes of war, such as disputes over wages, division of spoils and the possession of prisoners should be tried in the Marshal's court.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) Ramsay, ii, pp61-3; Beaucourt, iv, p92; Devon, Issues, pp448-9. Both Shrewsbury and his Countess received payment for their attendance on the Queen during the homecoming. He later presented her with a fine book, now deposited in the British Museum (Royal Mss, 15 E VI).

(2) Very little material has been printed on the role of Marshals. For a brief comment see M. H. Keen, The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages, pp26-7.

(3) College of Arms, R26, f 35.



Evidence of only one actual case has survived when, before 13 November 1446, he gave a decision against Sir Thomas Kyriel in a case of detention of wages.<sup>(1)</sup> Unfortunately, details of the powers, duties and organisation of the office are obscure and although important it remains a shadowy position.

Talbot's civilian duties are even harder to assess, for although he never held supreme civil authority, he probably took over fairly wide responsibilities within the Duchy of Normandy. The only surviving evidence is that in 1438 he was Governor of the Vicomtés of Augé, Orber and Pontaudemer, in which capacity he ordered his Vicontes to issue a proclamation forbidding the 'maintenance of dissolute women'.<sup>(2)</sup> One may guess that this is but a glimpse of a far greater burden of civilian duty.

### (iii)

Although appointed on 12 March 1445, Talbot was in no hurry to take up his post as Lieutenant of Ireland. He was in London in July, taking

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(1) CPR, 1446-52, p6. In 1452 he headed a commission, presumably as Marshal, to look into complaints of soldiers returned from France and Normandy against various captains for detentions of wages. He may also have been in general command of ordnance. There are several acquittances and musters in his name.

(2) BM, Ad Ch 12005.

part in the welcome and entertainment of the French ambassadors,<sup>(1)</sup> and following this for over a year there is no record whatsoever of his whereabouts or occupation. While he enjoyed a rare period of leisure, Ireland was governed by his brother, the Archbishop of Dublin, as Justiciar. It was not until September 1446, after he had been created Earl of Waterford (17 July) to enhance his authority there, that he prepared to go to Ireland. Even so he was only there for nine months and in July 1447 he was replaced by Richard of York.<sup>(2)</sup> It was probably agreed at the same time that he should return to Normandy with his brother-in-law, Edmund, Earl of Somerset, who after keen competition with York had succeeded in winning the Governorship which had been vacant since the end of York's term of office in 1445.

By 1448 the situation in Normandy had deteriorated to the point that the council were contemplating the renewal of war. All efforts to reach a permanent peace had been undermined by the dispute over Maine. But the English were ill-prepared for war. The military administration, which had shown signs of deterioration before the truce, had almost completely broken down. Several English captains, such as Roger, Lord Camoys, had become freebooters and the countryside was plagued by bandits

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(1) Wars of the English, i, p87 ff.

(2) For the details of Shrewsbury's second term of office in Ireland, see above pp134-5.



known as the "Faulx Visaiges".<sup>(1)</sup> The conquest, if it were to be held, was in need of firm and imaginative government, and this it did not receive.

Somerset, newly raised to the rank of Duke, crossed to Normandy in May 1448, and Shrewsbury, if he did not travel with him, arrived soon afterwards. Shrewsbury was given the command of Lower Normandy, which he held all but independently of Somerset, and made Falaise his headquarters, of which town he was also Captain.<sup>(2)</sup> He was at Falaise by the beginning of July and stayed there at least until Easter 1449.<sup>(3)</sup> Of his government of Lower Normandy little is known. There is some evidence of his attempting to reform the military administration, for soon after his arrival he set about bringing some of the freelances under control and took musters of several key fortresses.<sup>(4)</sup> But it does not appear that he achieved much.

- (1) A. Bossuat, op cit, p320. The bandits were known as "Faulx Visaiges" simply because they were masked. The great drop in the number of surviving documents relating to the military administration after 1444 is perhaps connected with the gradual collapse of the system created over twenty years earlier.
- (2) DNB, lv, p322; A. Bossuat, op cit, p322; 'Evidence put before Juvenal des Ursins on the taking of Fougères' in Basin, Histoire des regnes de Charles VII et Louis XI, iv, pp290-347, p314; AN, K 68/29/6.
- (3) Shrewsbury's personal retinue of 160 men was mustered at Falaise on 2 July and again on 27 December. He was also there at the time of the sack of Fougères (AN, K 68/29/6; BN, Ms Fr 25778/1830).
- (4) A. Bossuat, op cit, p318 n4.

In the autumn he attended the peace conferences which, originally planned for September between Pont-de-Larche and Louviers, were eventually held at Louviers in November, and which achieved an extension of the truce.<sup>(1)</sup> However, the English were already planning the fatal raid on Fougères, which they intended (somewhat hopefully) to use to bargain for Le Mans. The chief participants in this scheme were Suffolk, Somerset and François de Surienne, but it is inconceivable that Shrewsbury did not know about, or take part in, preparations. Evidence to this effect was brought out in the inquiry held later before Juvenal des Ursins.<sup>(2)</sup> One witness, Cardinot Rocque, a spicer of Rouen, commented that Somerset and Shrewsbury, being married to two sisters, worked in close partnership ('sont alliez ensemble') and were to all appearances in complete agreement. Rocque also stated that he had been in Falaise during the winter and the marshal of Shrewsbury's troops there had told him that a great enterprise was being planned of which he could not speak.<sup>(3)</sup> Shrewsbury had perhaps seen the risks involved, for according to another witness, Surienne's clerk, Pierre Tuvache, he had advised Somerset against the raid. But after the event, Tuvache commented, both

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(1) Beaucourt, iv, pp312, 319; Feodera, v, Pt ii, p7.

(2) The inquiry was held at Rouen in the following November. The findings were printed as an appendix to the 1859 edition of Basin's Histoires (see n 2 of previous page).

(3) 'Evidence before Juvenal des Ursin', loc cit, p314.



Somerset and Shrewsbury were very pleased that the enterprise had turned out so well.<sup>(1)</sup>

Fougères, a cloth manufacturing town on the border of Brittany, was surprised and captured by Surienne on 24 March 1449. Talbot, not far away at Falaise, immediately set about the supplying and victualling of the place.<sup>(2)</sup> Having reinforced Fougères as much as he could, he retired to Rouen to join Somerset and wait events. On 11 April he wrote home from Rouen asking for reinforcements.<sup>(3)</sup> In May the French took Pont-de-Larche, Conches and Gerberoy in retaliation and agreed to return them only if Fougères were returned to Brittany. This the English would not do. In July King Charles declared war.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Ibid, pp304, 307.

(2) Ibid, The evidence in detail of Pierre Tuvache, Cardinot Rocque and Pierre du Moustier.

(3) A. Bossuat, op cit, p333. On 13 May it was announced that Suffolk would lead an army of reinforcements, but this plan was soon abandoned and on 11 June a force of 1,300 men, without Suffolk, was mustered at Portsmouth on its way to France.

(4) The detailed narrative account of the fall of Normandy by the Herald Berry and Blondel were edited by J. Stevenson for the Rolls series in Narratives of the Expulsion of the English from Normandy. These can be augmented by William of Worcester's notes printed also by Stevenson in Wars of the English, ii, p619 ff. For a full and clear secondary account see Ramsay, ii, pp391-411.

Two armies, well equipped with guns and siege engines, under the Counts of Eu and Dunois attacked independently.<sup>(1)</sup> Dunois opened his advance by taking Verneuil on 19 July and Eu advanced from Pont-de-Larche to take Pontaudemer on 12 August. Meeting with scarcely any resistance the two armies took town after town before finally combining under King Charles himself in October and marching on Rouen. Strategically the one English hope had been to attack the divided armies at the very beginning of their advance. This indeed Talbot threatened to do in July. When Dunois appeared before Verneuil the garrison appealed for help and Talbot marched down as quickly as he could with a relief force. Dunois marched to meet him and the two armies eventually came up against each other between Beaumont le Roger and Harcourt on 31 July. Shrewsbury placed himself in a strong defensive position, but Dunois refused to attack. Not wishing to attack himself, Shrewsbury withdrew during the following night and ignominiously returned to Rouen, allowing Dunois to continue his advance.<sup>(2)</sup> Not even a threat was made towards the other army and the English remained rooted in Rouen until the French appeared.

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(1) A third under Francis, Duke of Brittany operated in the West.

(2) J. Stevenson, Narratives, pp57-62, 258-61. According to Blondel, Shrewsbury was at Beaumont le Roger when the appeal came. He marched south as far as Breteuil but, deciding he could do little to help Verneuil, he withdrew to the position between Beaumont and Harcourt. He appears never to have had the intention to attack himself.



Talbot may not have had a very large army at his disposal,<sup>(1)</sup> but regardless of size it was probably the poor quality and morale of his troops which caused him to be so hesitant. And perhaps even he felt that resistance was useless. At all levels the English no longer had the will to resist. When Rouen was finally attacked Shrewsbury did show a final spark of his old vigour and daring but it was far too late. The French managed to scale the walls on 16 October, but Shrewsbury personally led a determined counter-attack and repulsed them.<sup>(2)</sup> Three days later (19 October), however, the citizens turned against the English who retreated to the castle, leaving the city to the French. Here a stand was attempted but King Charles brought up such a power of artillery that resistance became pointless. Somerset attempted to negotiate an honourable surrender, but after ten days he was forced to accept King Charles' terms. These were that he was to surrender eight hostages, including Shrewsbury, as surety that not only Rouen but also the entire Caux would surrender in fifteen days.<sup>(3)</sup> The hostages were handed over and Somerset marched out to Caen.

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- (1) Although Blondel maintains "ab omnium praesidiorum..... copias armamentorum congerit" there is unfortunately no documentary evidence on the size of his army (ibid, p57).
- (2) Ibid, pp295-6.
- (3) Ibid, p296 ff. Berry tells that Somerset would, particularly, not consent to leave Talbot as a hostage until the position became utterly hopeless (p306). For the treaty of surrender see Wars of the English, ii, pp607-18.

Talbot's years of service in Normandy thus came to an end. He was at first held at Rouen, paying a courtesy visit to King Charles who lodged at St. Katherine's monastery. He also witnessed the formal entry of the King to the city on 10 November from a window overlooking Nôtre Dame in the company of his fellow hostages, the ladies and other notables. He was apparently asked if he did not consider the King was well equipped, to which he replied that he did not hold much by the trappings of war, which were only to give heart to soldiers. But he praised the King, saying that he would rather fight under him with ten thousand men than under another with twenty thousand.<sup>(1)</sup> When the formalities were concluded he was transferred to Dreux and, because Harfleur and other places under his lieutenants refused to surrender, he was kept prisoner. In fact, he was not released until 11 July 1450, when his garrison at Falaise surrendered, and then only on condition that he undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, which he had given the King to understand was his wish.<sup>(2)</sup> And so he left Normandy for the last time.

There can be little doubt that the decline in Talbot's powers,

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(1) Beaucourt, v, pp18, 23-4; J. Stevenson, Narratives, p319.

(2) Wars of the English, ii, pp629, 735-42, particularly p738, Clause 4 of the Treaty of Falaise in which Shrewsbury agreed to go to Rome. It was also said by 'William Worcester' that he undertook at the surrender of Rouen not to carry arms against France for one year (ibid, p767).



traceable as early as 1443, was more marked after 1448.<sup>(1)</sup> If blame is to be attached to the commanders for the loss of Normandy, Shrewsbury was no less culpable than Somerset. Yet it is remarkable that his reputation was in no way dented by the disaster. The French themselves paid a compliment to it in insisting that he should be removed from the theatre of war. It was indeed perhaps this very fact, and the manner in which Somerset had to accept his surrender as a hostage, that saved his name. The poems attacking Suffolk's régime infer that, if free, he would still have saved Normandy, for Suffolk was to blame that

"he is bounden that our dore should kepe  
that is Talbot our goode dogge".<sup>(2)</sup>

Two years later, when York accused Somerset, Talbot was carefully exempted from any association with the blunders. Although York had no quarrel with Talbot, he may also have been maintaining the current image of Talbot, the frustrated hero.<sup>(3)</sup> It was an ironic twist that, although he did little in the last year of the occupation of Normandy to enhance his name, he became regarded as the thwarted champion of England.

(1) Blondel, who devoted one chapter (30) to reflections on Talbot's conduct early in the campaign, expressed in his own oratorical way the opinion that Talbot was broken in spirit and had lost all his old violent energy (J. Stevenson, Narratives, pp60-2).

(2) Political Songs and Poems (Rolls Series 14), Pt ii, pp222, 224.

(3) Paston Letters, i, p103 ff. York may also have hoped to detach Talbot from his connection with Somerset. It is perhaps significant that Pigott's comment that Talbot was most feared of all others in war was made on the occasion of his return from Rome.

Shrewsbury returned to England from Rome on 20 December 1450<sup>(1)</sup> to find the realm in a restless state; London and the South-East had been shaken by Cade's rebellion and his old enemies, the Berkeleys, had taken advantage of the presence of Lord Lisle in the King's army at Blackheath, to sack the manor of Wotton-under-Edge.<sup>(2)</sup> After Suffolk's banishment and death, both York and Somerset had returned from overseas to compete for pre-eminence at court. Somerset's early success was challenged by York in Parliament and threatened by riots in London, ~~for~~ which York took the credit for suppressing. Shrewsbury was thus straightway placed in a dilemma between supporting his own Lord, York, or his brother-in-law, Somerset.<sup>(3)</sup> In the following eighteen months, in loyally serving his King, he inevitably appeared to be more closely attached to Somerset's court party.

On 27 January he was appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer in Kent under Somerset.<sup>(4)</sup> The court clearly attached some importance, for the King presided over the tour of Rochester, Canterbury and Faversham,

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(1) The fourth Sunday in Advent. C. L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature, p372.

(2) Ibid, p366.

(3) For details of Talbot's connection with York see below p228

(4) CPR, 1446-52, pp435, 442. York had apparently refused to serve on this commission (Paston Letters, ii, p205).



which saw the execution of at least thirty suspect rebels.<sup>(1)</sup> In March and April, Shrewsbury was further occupied in conducting inquisitions on further suspects and in May he was appointed to another commission of oyer and terminer in Surrey.<sup>(2)</sup> But by 16 June he had left London and the court and was reported to be in Gloucestershire planning to attack Lord Berkeley and swearing not to return to court until he had done so.<sup>(3)</sup> In fact, in September, at the time of the Earl of Devon's campaign in Somerset against Lord Bonvill, he was summoned to join the King in the Midlands with as many men as he could muster.<sup>(4)</sup> It was at this time that his son, Viscount Lisle, seized Berkeley castle.

It is clear that Shrewsbury did not become an important figure at court or a leading member of the council. He remained in the background of politics. Nevertheless, it was no doubt in recognition of their services that he and Viscount Lisle were granted the custody of Porchester castle and the governorship of Portsmouth in November 1451.<sup>(5)</sup> One reason why Shrewsbury did not identify himself with the court faction

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(1) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p372.

(2) CPR, 1446-52, pp443, 444, 475, 477.

(3) So Isabel, Lady Berkeley, writing to her husband (J. Smyth, Lives of the Berkeleys, ii, p63).

(4) R. L. Storey, The End of the House of Lancaster, p91.

(5) CPR, 1446-52, p568. The grant was reissued to Shrewsbury alone on the following 17 February (ibid, p517).

was that he had no personal quarrel with York. Indeed, it was no doubt because their close connection still survived that York asked Shrewsbury, with the Bishop of Hereford, to come to Ludlow towards the end of 1451 in order that he might defend and justify his position. To them, wrote York on 9 January, he offered to swear his loyalty on the sacraments and begged them to report his offer to the King.<sup>(1)</sup> Nevertheless, in February, when York ended his self-imposed exile and made another attempt to oust Somerset, this time by force, Shrewsbury stayed firmly by the King. He was with the court when it moved to Northampton to meet York and was presumably still there when it came face to face with him at Dartford on 3 March.<sup>(2)</sup> He was not, however, one of those chosen then to act as mediator, but he was probably prominent in the negotiations that took place between 3 and 10 March at Westminster and on 13 March he was one of the arbitrators appointed to attempt to resolve the feud between the two Dukes.<sup>(3)</sup>

The attention of the court was also drawn to the desperate situation in France. Having conquered Aquitaine in 1451, a year later King Charles was preparing to attack Calais, the last remaining English foothold on the

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(1) Paston Letters, i, p96.

(2) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p373.

(3) Ramsay, ii, p150; CCR, 1447-54, p327.



continent.<sup>(1)</sup> If in disagreement in all else, Somerset and York probably both approved of Shrewsbury's appointment on 14 March to the command of the fleet and the defence of Calais and if necessary the coasts of England.<sup>(2)</sup> On his part Shrewsbury was probably glad of a chance to escape from court intrigues. Letters were sent out to various lords and the mayors of various ports requesting them to gather men and ships at Sandwich or elsewhere. Lord Clifford, for instance, was asked to bring five ships, one his own, and 1,000 men, and was paid 500 marks in advance.<sup>(3)</sup> Indentures seem to have been bypassed. It is unknown, however, how quickly or completely the fleet was raised or if it ever put to sea at that time, for the immediate danger passed away when King Charles called off the attack on Calais. Nor was Shrewsbury in any hurry to go to sea.<sup>(4)</sup> On 11 May he was appointed once again to a commission of oyer and terminer in Kent. During this assize he executed many more suspect rebels and caused a further 28 heads to be displayed on London Bridge.<sup>(5)</sup> It was not until July that he turned once more to the business of his service at sea.

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(1) Beaucourt, v, pp34, 364; Proc Priv Counc, vi, p119; Wars of the English, ii, p477.

(2) Proc Priv Counc, vi, p120.

(3) Ibid, pp120-5; Wars of the English, ii, pp477-8.

(4) He was possibly at Painswick, Gloucestershire, on 1 April. (S. Rudder A New History of Gloucestershire, p593).

(5) C. L. Kingsford, op cit, p368; CPR, 1446-52, p577, 1452-61, p101. One of those executed was a captain of a band of rebels, John Wilkins, who was temporarily imprisoned in the Tower before execution at Dartford.

On 17 July Shrewsbury drew £2,000 from the exchequer for 3,000 men. On the same day indentures were drawn up with his captains.<sup>(1)</sup> It had now been decided to send the army to Gascony. In March envoys had come over to England from Bordeaux to request for assistance, but originally Calais was the council's principal concern. Only when it became clear that Calais was safe was it decided to mount an expedition to Gascony. On 2 September Shrewsbury was appointed Lieutenant of Aquitaine,<sup>(2)</sup> (when preparations were almost complete) and the expedition set sail later in the same month.

Shrewsbury and his fleet enjoyed a comfortable and speedy journey and landed in the Garonne near Soulac on 21 October. The following evening Bordeaux opened its gates.<sup>(3)</sup> The English were in fact welcomed as a liberating army and most of Gascony followed Bordeaux's example.<sup>(4)</sup> By the winter Shrewsbury had established himself in the whole area with the greatest of ease. In England an army of reinforcements of over 2,000 men was raised to be commanded by Viscount Lisle. These men were

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(1) PRO Issue Roll, Easter 30 Hen V, m5; CPR, 1452-60, pp78, 108; CCR, 1447-54, p360. John Sharpe of Bristol agreed to provide the 'Marie' 300 tons for the fleet. His chief captains were Edward Hull and Gervaise Clifton.

(2) CPR, 1452-60, p55.

(3) Beaucourt, v, pp265-7. For the fullest account of the events that followed see also H. Ribadieu, La Conquête de la Guyenne, for the latest Y. Renouard, Bordeaux sous les Rois D'Angleterre, pp515-8.

(4) St. Makeris, Ryons, Langon, Mark, Libourne, St. Emilion and Castillon had all been occupied by 25 December (CPR, 1452-60, pp78, 108).



mustered at Dartmouth or Plymouth on 26 January and joined Shrewsbury at the end of March 1453.<sup>(1)</sup> He had now to weather the French counter-attack.

As in Normandy, King Charles advanced on several fronts. The Count of Clermont, the Count of Foix and Jean Bureau were given command of three separate armies converging from the North and West on Bordeaux. Talbot, however, was first in the field and took Fronsac, but then, as the French armies began their advance, he moved back to Bordeaux. By June, Clermont had reduced St. Severs and entered the Medoc. Here he was joined by Gaston de Foix and Shrewsbury decided to challenge them. On 21 June he sent a verbal challenge and then advanced with his army to Martignas. But, as at Harcourt four years earlier, after assessing the strength of his enemy he withdrew. He appears to have been gripped by indecision once more. He had probably sent home for more troops and was possibly waiting for their arrival. Be that as it may, he waited irresolutely in Bordeaux. On 8 July the army under Bureau moving down the Dordogne laid siege to Castillon and the garrison wrote desperately for aid. One chronicler, Mathew d'Escouchy, suggested that he would not have gone had it not been for the citizens who were beginning to accuse

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(1) Wars of the English, ii, pp479-80. Lisle commanded a retinue of 880, whilst a further 1,440 men were provided by Lords Moleyns and Camoys, Sir John Lisle and John, Bastard of Somerset.

him openly of bad faith and cowardice. Another, Jouvencal, was more favourably inclined and considered that he now decided to turn on Bureau's smaller army and having dealt with that turn on the other. There may well have been truth in both, for Shrewsbury hesitated no longer and marched straight to Castillon.<sup>(1)</sup>

The story of this the last battle of his life, and the last of the Hundred Years War, will not be repeated in detail. A vivid account has been given by A. H. Burne.<sup>(2)</sup> It will suffice here to emphasise certain factors. Although not eighty, as legend maintains, he was still over sixty-five, an age at which even in our day men are expected to retire. But Shrewsbury, if perhaps his age had told in his hesitancy during the summer, now showed some of his old dash and resolution as he led his army by forced day and night marches to Castillon. These forced marches may have had some bearing on the battle for, as at Patay, his soldiers had little time to rest and must have been tired. Moreover, during the march the van of mounted men had easily outstripped the footmen and it was essentially this van that was thrown against the French encampment. On hearing of the English approach Bureau had broken off the siege and retired to a fortified camp, and the battle took the form of an assault on this position which was heavily defended by artillery. The most puzzling question is why Shrewsbury attacked this position with only the

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(1) Beaucourt, v, pp268-72.

(2) The Agincourt War, pp333-342.



forward sections of his army who had not fully rested after a long march. It appears that soon after arriving at Castillon he was misinformed by a scout that the French had struck camp and were retreating. On this information, and against the advice of some of his captains, he gave the order to advance in battle array, only to find the enemy waiting behind their defences. He still could have delayed, but rather than give a counter order and lose face he decided to press on with the attack. Pride and chivalric code no doubt played its part. The subsequent battle was fierce and for a time the English gained the ramparts. But the massed cannon fire at short range was devastating and when a troop of cavalry charged the flank the army fell back. Shrewsbury and Lisle seem to have fallen trying to rally their men and after their deaths the English were routed. On the following day Shrewsbury's body was found but only recognised by a missing tooth. Eventually his remains were sent back to Whitchurch where they were interred in the parish church.<sup>(1)</sup> The defeat

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(1) The official account of the battle by the herald Berry (p469) was written within one year of the battle; those of Chartier (iii, p7) and Mathew d'Escouchy (ii, pp36-41) were written within a few years. Basin writing 24 years after the event tells of the advice to delay the battle (ii, pp195-6). For a full discussion of the reports of the battle see Burne, pp344-5. The accounts of how he was killed vary; some say that having been wounded and unhorsed this throat was cut (Berry and Chartier), others that he received a blow on the skull (d'Escouchy). The evidence of his skeleton, when disinterred in 1874, seemed to endorse the latter for there was a fracture in his skull  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $\frac{5}{8}$ " (W. H. Egerton, 'Talbot's Tomb', TSAS, viii, pp413-40, particularly p425). The body was recognised by the absence of a molar tooth on the left side. It so happens that his granddaughter, Anne Mowbray,

(continued overleaf)

and Shrewsbury's death spelt the end of English rule in Gascony.

(iv)

Talbot was by no means the brilliant general portrayed by A. H. Burne. Yet his qualities are not easily assessed. E. Carleton Williams, for instance, suggested that he had neither the ability to read his opponents' minds nor the skill to forestall their movements, but rather whenever he caught sight of the enemy dashed headlong at him regardless of the odds.<sup>(1)</sup> The first of these criticisms seem to be of her own invention; the second demonstratively untrue. On several

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whose body was uncovered at the Minories in 1965, was found to have a 'congenital absence of upper and lower permanent second molars on the left' (M. A. Rushton, 'The Teeth of Anne Mowbray', British Dental Journal, 19 October 1965, pp355-6). The manner in which d'Escouchy reports the recognition of the body, the fact that in 1874 his skull was found to have only one molar (which side was not stated) and this evidence strongly suggest that he shared this abnormality. He has been supposed to have suffered from symphalangism, the congenital fusing of the joints of the fingers, found in later generations of the family but there is little or no evidence to support this (for a discussion of this see S. G. Elkington and R. G. Huntsman, 'The Talbot Fingers: a study in symphalangism', British Medical Journal, 18 February 1967, pp407-11). (The authors, strangely, do not make any reference to the possibility of a congenital dental abnormality).

(1) E. Carleton Williams, My Lord of Bedford, pp148, 170.



occasions Talbot appears to have been only too aware of the odds against him. Four times at least in his career he refused to be drawn into battle with an enemy prepared to challenge him; he refused to fight in Beaugency on 17 June 1429 and during the siege of Pontoise in August 1441, when the odds were too great, but he might have been well advised to fight near Harcourt on 31 July 1449 and at Martignas in June 1453. Indeed, in his later years he appears to have become increasingly irresolute and overcautious.

Nor do Talbot's two major defeats seem to have resulted simply from recklessness. At Patay the mistake was largely strategic - attempting to hold an advance front with a weak and divided army. Withdrawing too late, his army was caught by surprise and did not stand a chance. His fault seems to have been his stubborn refusal to give ground and his, understandable, failure to appreciate the miraculous change in French morale achieved by Jeanne D'Arc. These same traits revealed themselves, tactically, at Castillon. Finding himself in front of a vastly superior enemy, he refused to withdraw or issue counter orders. His judgment and capability no doubt declined with age, but he was temperamentally ill-suited to general command, being alternately irresolute and, once a decision was made, inflexible.

On the other hand, Talbot's weaknesses as a general commander did not diminish his qualities as a captain of a small force. Stubbornness,

a refusal to give ground, allied with his undoubted personal prowess and courage, vigour and indefatigability, were just the qualities needed for the defence of Normandy between 1435 and 1445. They probably saved the Duchy in 1436. His ability to move fast and to drive and inspire his men to do likewise was remarkable. Both Patay and Castillon were fought after forced marches, which perhaps contributed to the defeats, but in smaller engagements, as at the relief of Le Mans in 1428, the relief of Gisors in 1436 or the sack of Poissy in 1441, he showed a real flair. What he lacked as a strategist and tactician he made up as a leader of men. He was above all a soldier's soldier and at the peak of his prowess, before advancing age undermined his own and other's confidence in his abilities, the cry of 'Talbot! St. George!' could achieve much.<sup>(1)</sup>

But his reputation was founded on more than his prowess or his abilities as a soldier. One element was the cruel and ruthless streak in his nature. It was this that made a particular impression on French commentators. Chartier wrote in an obituary comment of "ce fameux et renommé chef anglois qui depuis si longtemps passoit pour l'un des fleaux le plus reformidable et plus jurez ennemis de la France, dont

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(1) One may perhaps, in this respect, compare him with General Patton in the Second World War.



il avoit paru estre l'effroy et la terreur".<sup>(1)</sup> Basin, more philosophically, wrote of his death "et sic iudicium ei sine misericordia redditum est, qui aliis misericordiam non fecerat et qui gladio multos percusserat gladio et ipse periit. Fuerat enim sevens admodum et crudelis in Francos, unde ad ultimum parem sibi eciam vicem retulerant."<sup>(2)</sup> These are opinions born out not only by personal acts of cruelty occasionally recorded by the chroniclers,<sup>(3)</sup> but also by the policy of wholesale destruction in the Caux and the Île de France which may be attributed to him. The age was no doubt far less delicate than ours, but there is reason to suspect that Talbot's brutality was exceptional. Yet, as far as England was concerned, the end justified the means, and he became a hero, not a villain.

To Henry VI and his council Talbot's methods were relatively unimportant. His greatest quality was his loyalty, diligence and his dedication

(1) Chartier, iii, p7.

(2) Basin, ii, p199.

(3) After taking Laval in 1428, for instance, he is supposed to have had 65 men, including priests, executed as traitors. The same fate befell some of the citizens of Gisors in 1436 and those of Rouen in 1449. On one occasion, during the defence of Pontoise in 1441, Basin tells that he struck down a helpless French prisoner with his axe. This story may be fanciful but the fact that it is told is evidence that he was exceptionally violent. And it was not only Frenchmen who noted such incidents. The Irish found him a hard ruler and the citizens of London were disgusted by his display of rebel heads in 1452. (Hall, p143; Monstrelet, ii, p33; Basin, i, p274; Annals of 'William Worcester', Wars of the English, ii, p765; E. Curtis, History of Medieval Ireland, p292; C. L. Kingsford, op cit, pp368, 372).

to the task of holding the Lancastrian continental conquests. He had served in France under Henry V and was perhaps personally inspired by Henry's dream of conquest to give the greater part of his life and his death to the forlorn struggle. And although even his enthusiasm and abilities waned towards the end, he spent far longer in France than any of his contemporary peers. His loyalty did not pass unnoticed by either the Norman or English council. In 1441 the council at Rouen drew attention to his 'high and notable desire to do the best he can for you against your said enemies', and in 1446 the English council recommended his creation as Earl of Waterford partly 'in consideration of his strenuous probity even to old age in the wars'.<sup>(1)</sup>

Probity and a sense of political responsibility were perhaps the key factors in his attitude to conciliar government and home politics. In the early years of the reign of Henry VI he was most closely associated with John, Duke of Bedford, and Richard, Earl of Warwick, and probably shared with them their desire for a united council, above the domination of any one man or faction. In his later years, when the hope for this had long been lost, he was careful not to associate himself too closely with either York or Somerset, endeavouring perhaps, without compromising his own unreserved loyalty to the King, to find means of bringing about a reconciliation.

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(1) Wars of the English, ii, pp603 ff; CPR, 1441-6, p448.



Why then the legend? Several reasons may be suggested. Talbot was the last of Henry V's companions. The length of his career, his age, his association with the glorious years helped to create an aura in the knightly class at a time when heroes were rare. Although he was not a great general and was lacking in some at least of the chivalric qualities, he was the epitome of a warrior and a model patriot, having those qualities of valour and loyalty and a sense of duty and self respect which were the essentials of the knightly code. One must not forget that war was seen in terms of valour, not terms of generalship. And there can be no doubt that Talbot demonstrated his valour time and time again. It is of this, not his abilities as a general, that Polydore Vergil spoke when he described him as a 'man amongst men.... who was conqueror in so many sundry conflictcs'. It was upon this, not strategic or tactical skills, that military glory was based. Moreover, the manner of his death, leading a traditional medieval charge against massed artillery, very soon came to symbolise the passing of a military age and the eclipse of the prowess of English arms on the continent of Europe for two hundred and fifty years. Reality is rarely a match to an ideal and perhaps after all John Talbot, the man, was not much less deserving than other more renowned knights to be the subject of a legend of chivalry.